THE IDEAL FATHER

By:
Maulânâ Muhammad Hanîf
'Abdul Majîd

Translated By:
Mufti Muhammad Kadwa
Publication Department Madrasah Arabia Islamia

MAKTABA DARUL
HUDA

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A comprehensive book outlining the principles of being an ideal Father

By:
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FOREWORD

By: Mufti Nizâmud-Dîn Shâmzî

Islâm has come to us as a fountainhead of mercy through which the system of our lives can be well regulated. Islamic society can only be remedied when we adopt true Islamic fundamentals within our lives.

The most precious capital of any nation is its children. If today they are playing on the laps (of their parents) then the same children will turn out to be the builders of tomorrow. When a child is born, he is confronted with two elders; his father and his mother. His father is his first teacher.

This is the school from which the child assimilates either righteousness or evil habits, and character. This is the first teacher from which the child imbibes either the spirit of obedience or the bane of disobedience. Hence, it is the responsibility of the father that he nurtures his child in such a manner that the spirit of Dîn is ingrained in every fibre of the child. Therefore, the father is also required to inculcate these virtuous attributes within himself as the father serves as a practical model for the child.

If the father inculcates favourable character, observes his Salâh regularly and refrains from evil and sin, Inshâ Allâh, the child will automatically follow the same route.

Fourteen hundred years ago, Rasûlullâh ﷺ informed the Muslims about certain basic principles of nurturing their children. By practically implementing these principles, the Muslims brought their children up as required by Islâmic law. They spiritually nurtured their children in a manner which developed the love of Allâh ﷻ and His Rasûl ﷺ in their hearts. They were moulded in such a way that their entire lives revolved around the spirit of Islâm. People like Ibn

`Umar ﷺ, Ibn `Abbâs ﷺ and Ibn Zubair ﷺ were the fruit of this upbringing.

With this heartfelt objective in mind, my colleague Maulânâ Muhammad Hanîf `Abdul Majîd Sâhib and his friends have compiled a few life-altering books like *Tohfa-e-Dulhan* and *Tohfa-e-Dulhâ* etc. which are quite effective in eliminating social problems and conducive in yielding a spiritually healthy society. Similarly, they have initiated a series entitled *Âsân Dîniyât*, *Asmâ-e-Hûsnâ* etc. which are remarkably beneficial for the development of the mental faculties of the child.

The *kitâb* under review **'The Ideal Father'** is also part of these series. This book deals with, amongst other things, the correct Islâmic principles of raising children and the Islâmic formulae for moulding them as perfect Muslims. This humble servant has cast a glance over selected parts of the book. I'm sure the other parts of this book are authentic as well. The writing of the book is sincere, simple and all encompassing. The masses would find it easy to understand. I am of the view that this *kitâb*, like the previous two, is quite beneficial in the upbringing of the child.

May Allâh ﷻ accept this book and grant the Ummah the divine guidance to practice upon it and may He render this book a source of treasure in the hereafter for Maulânâ as well his colleagues and may Allâh ﷻ grant him the ability to continue providing such services to His Dîn. Âmîn.

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About The Book

This book deals with, amongst other things, the responsibilities devolving upon the Muslim father. For instance, the selection of a pious and devoted wife, making Du'âs for pious children, adoption of the golden principles of child-rearing, pursuit of the vital strategies in the mental development of the child, Islâmic spiritual enhancement, to ensure that Tauhîd (the unity of Allâh ﷻ) is embedded in every fibre of the child, to endeavour to cultivate the spirit of the love of Allâh ﷻ and the love of His beloved Rasûl ﷺ within their hearts. How can these innocent children of today become perfect *Mu'mins, Mujâhids, Dâ'îes,* and leaders of the Ummah tomorrow? How can the importance of the Holy Qur'ân and the Ahâdîth be cultivated within them? How can the love and reverence of the parents be nurtured within their hearts? Taking into account their temperaments and the occasion, how can the children be brought up to possess the Dînî concern of the whole Ummah and how to cultivate within them the spirit of selflessness that enables them to sacrifice everything they have for one another?

These and a number of other issues are discussed in this book in the light of illustrations and narratives whilst taking into account certain basic principles of psychology. Many other such issues are very simply dealt within this book, which can easily be brought into practice by the father thereby making him a role model for his children.

We cherish a fervent hope upon Allâh ﷻ that the practical implementation of these principles will bring about a spiritually wholesome and peaceful society and every household may become a reflection of Jannah in this world. {Inshâ Allâh}

An Important Request

During the course of you reading this book, if you do come across any errors or shortcomings, or if you do feel the need to forward any constructive criticism, kindly inform the publishers or the Ustâds of Madrasah Baytul `Ilm, Gulshan-e-Iqbâl, Karachi. We would be greatly indebted to you and we would remember you in our special Du'âs, Inshâ Allâh.

Wassalâm.



How to Read This Book

Remember that the intention of a Muslim is of paramount importance. Hence, before reading this book form the intention that I am reading this book to please Allâh ﷻ, and that I will endeavour to practice whatever Dînî-related issues are mentioned in this book. If you read it with this intention, Allâh ﷻ will definitely grant you the divine ability to practice. If you do encounter any difficulty in carrying out anything, Allâh ﷻ will simplify it for you, due to your sincere intention and the *barkat* of your purpose. Whatever time you spend in reading this book will all be regarded as Dîn and as a form of `*Ibâdat*.

This *kitâb* is vital for a favourable family life. If the family is disciplined, society will also follow suit. If one's domestic life is in order then his life outside the home will also be in order. Hence, we urge you to earnestly read these advices on domestic reformation and try as far as possible to refrain from those things warned about in this book. Read this book with the intention of self-reformation and with the intention that I will refrain and make others refrain from such offences. The soul of the *kitâb* lies in practically implementing its teachings. If the *kitâb*'s values are put into practice, one may well say that he has read the book otherwise not. I hope you keep in mind our plea during the course of your reading.

1. Before reading this book make Du'â saying, O Allâh! Render this book a source of my guidance and make me an idyllic mentor and a pious and model father for my children.
2. Allocate such a time for reading this book that is devoid of any unease and confusion. There could be a possibility that you are uneasy over some other issue whereas you feel that the subject matter of the *Kitâb* is throwing you into turmoil.

3. We urgently implore you to read the entire book from cover to cover but in sequence. Even if it takes you a whole month or more, read the whole book in sequence. Take the total number of pages and work out an average daily-read. Thereafter read the allotted pages for each day making use of a bookmark at the end of each read.
4. Keep a pen at hand whilst reading this book. Mark off the points you feel you are lacking in. Read those advices repeatedly and make Du'â for reforming yourself accordingly.

Another benefit of keeping a pen at hand is that you will be able to add on some additional point which you feel will benefit another reader. Also whilst studying this book, you, as a Muslim man or as a husband or as a father, may want to share some point of responsibility with your Muslim brothers which they may find conducive to alleviating their domestic problems. You may share your advices with others by jotting down notes in the margin or alternatively if you feel that something beneficial has been left out from this book, make a note of it on a separate sheet of paper under the heading of 'elaboration'. Specify the page number and line under which you feel this should be added and thereafter submit this to the compiler or publisher.

Whilst reading this book, remember all the married couples of the world in your Du'âs. Make Du'â that Allâh ﷻ engenders love and affection between them and that they become a means of pious children and that may Allâh ﷻ bestow upon them the blessings of happiness and joy. Make Du'â every single day saying, O Allâh! Cultivate true love between all those who are tying the knot today and render this union a source of love and pious children.

Offer this book to other Muslim brothers as well. Also draw the attention of the other brothers towards those aspects of this book dealing with *Îmânî* and *Akhlâqî* (moral) progress.

And finally, we request your special Du'âs for the author of this book, the authors of the books employed in the compilation of this book, and the `Ulamâ or others who guided this publication and those who assisted in the publication of this book in any way whatsoever. You will also benefit from this Du'â. Do not overlook us whilst making Du'â.

May Allâh ﷻ reward you.

What will happen to my Children after My Death?

People deliberate over this dilemma and somehow manage doing something for the benefit of their children. Such people are considered far-sighted and intelligent. However, ...

What will happen to the Children after Their Death?

Very few people ponder over this question whereas this is the primary question. If our children lack piety and righteousness, no matter what their worldly achievements, they would be doomed to failure.

Far-sighted and intelligent people are much more concerned about the hereafter than this transitory world. If you are a far-sighted and intelligent father, concern yourself with the piety and righteousness of your children.

Pray (make Du'â) for Your Children

As the occasions demand, there are a number of techniques one can employ in bringing up children. However, Hadrat Shaikh 'Abdul-Wahhâb Sh'arânî *rahmatullâhi 'alaih* writes in *Latâiful-Minan Wal-Akhlâq*: "The most effective step in reforming the children lies in the parents making constant Du'â for their children."

Du'â does not financially burden anyone nor does it require any form of enormous sacrifice. Therefore, the easiest course of action for the betterment of your children's religious and worldly life is Du'â. A number of parents are seen grumbling about the moral decomposition of their children and they hold the children responsible for this moral decay. Why are they so neglectful of the simple but impressive technique shown to us by Allâh ﷻ? Nonetheless, let us all undertake to make special Du'âs for our children without any form of deficiency on our part.

The lives of all the Ambiyâ عليهم السلام, particularly the personality of Rasûlullâh ﷺ is worth following. Making Du'â for the children has been the tradition of all the Ambiyâ عليهم السلام. In actual fact, the Ambiyâ عليهم السلام, are well-acquainted with the correct procedure and words of the Du'âs. Their Du'âs are educational and enlighten us on how to ask and what to ask for in our Du'âs.

The Du'âs mentioned in the Holy Qur'ân and Ahâdîth are Du'âs gleaming with prophetic intuition. The Du'âs are such as though Allâh ﷻ Himself is proposing, make Du'â in this manner and ask of Me like this. There is no doubt that Allâh Ta'âlâ would readily accept such Du'âs. So, all Muslim parents are requested to pray with these words especially after the five daily Fard Salâh.

Some of these Du'âs are:

رَبِّ هَبْ لِي مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ

Translation: "O Allâh! Grant me a pious child."

What a simple but comprehensive Du'â! Recite this Du'â repeatedly even whilst walking about. Encourage your wife to do the same. Especially during pregnancy, you and your wife should make this Du'â your sole interest. Inshâ Allâh,

Allâh ﷻ will bless you with a child that would be a source of worldly and Dînî success not only for you but also for the entire family and generations to come.

رَبِّ اجْعَلْ هَـٰذَا الْبَلَدَ آمِنًا وَاجْنُبْنِي وَبَنِيَّ أَن نَّعْبُدَ الْأَصْنَامَ

"O Allâh! Render this city (Makkah) safe and safeguard my sons and I from the worshiping of idols." *[Sûrah Ibrâhîm verse 35]*

This is a magnificent Du'â to protect oneself from *shirk* (polytheism), to entertain flawless belief in the oneness of Allâh ﷻ and to entrench the belief of monotheism within the heart. With regard to this Du'â, Muftî Muhammad Shafî Sâhib *rahmatullâhi 'alaih* writes: "The Ambiyâ عليهم السلام are totally untarnished by sin. There is no question of them committing any form of sin let alone idol worshipping. However, Ibrâhîm عليه السلام includes himself in this Du'â. The reason for this is that the Ambiyâ عليهم السلام maintain an innate fear of falling into danger. Another reason he made this Du'â is to beg Allâh ﷻ to protect his children from idol worship. In order to portray the gravity of this transgression to his children he included himself also in this Du'â. Allâh ﷻ accepted the Du'â of His Khalîl, Ibrâhîm عليه السلام and He safeguarded the children of Ibrâhîm عليه السلام from idol worship." *[Ma'âriful Qur'ân vol.5 p.260]*

رَّبَّنَا إِنِّي أَسْكَنتُ مِن ذُرِّيَّتِي بِوَادٍ غَيْرِ ذِي زَرْعٍ عِندَ بَيْتِكَ الْمُحَرَّمِ رَبَّنَا لِيُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ فَاجْعَلْ أَفْئِدَةً مِّنَ النَّاسِ تَهْوِي إِلَيْهِمْ وَارْزُقْهُم مِّنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَشْكُرُونَ

"Our Lord! I have settled my family near Your sacred house in a barren valley. Our Lord, so that they may establish Salâh. So incline the hearts of some people towards them and (purely out of your power) feed them with fruits so that they may express gratitude (over these bounties)." *[Sûrah Ibrâhîm verse 37]*

Actually, this Du'â was made by Hadrat Ibrâhîm whilst he was departing from Makkah leaving his wife, Hadrat Hâjirah *alaihas salâm* and his son, Hadrat Ismâ'îl in an arid and barren valley of Makkah. With regard to this Du'â, Hadrat Maulânâ Muftî Muhammad Shafî Sâhib *rahmatullâhi 'alaih* writes in Ma'âriful Qur'ân under the caption, 'The wisdom behind the Du'â of Hadrat Ibrâhîm': "On one hand Hadrat Ibrâhîm fulfils the right of his companionship with Allâh; the moment he was commanded to proceed towards *Shâm* (Syria), he did so. Without the least bit of hesitation, he executed the commandment of Allâh and left his beloved wife and suckling child in a barren and parched land. In executing this commandment, he didn't even linger to console his wife and explain to her that he is fulfilling a divine commandment. He set out the instant he received this divine commandment.

On the other hand, he fulfils the rights of his family as well. The moment he emerged from the valley and he was unable to see them, he made Du'â for their protection and safety. He made preparations for their comfort. He was well-aware of the fact that a Du'â made whilst executing a commandment of Allâh is never rejected. And this is exactly what transpired. A deserted woman and a vulnerable child were not only well cared for but with their blessing, a whole city sprang up." *[Extracted with amendments from Ma'âriful Qur'ân vol.5 p.264]*

The point highlighted in this point of discussion is that compliance with the divine commandments of Allâh is of utmost importance. This accompanied by Du'â adds 'lustre to gold.' In other words, performance of the five daily Salâh with Jamâ'at, timeous and prompt payment of Zakât for a possessor of *Nisâb*, the performance of Hajj for he who can afford the journey, the proper discharge of human rights, to spend one's life, wealth and abilities in bringing the whole of mankind onto the path of Dîn, coupled with the implementation of these, if one maintains constant Du'â,

there is no doubt of the encouraging reception of his Du'â. His Du'â will be accepted without delay.

Moreover, it is important to be earnestly attentive towards the legitimate needs of the wife and children and to work hard at providing *Halâl* sustenance for them. If not *Biryânî*, *Qormâ*, chicken and silk then at least lentils, vegetables and cotton. When you have to go out in the path of Allâh for the elevation of Dîn and you take your family members in confidence, whilst being concerned about their rights, it is also essential to weep and make Du'â for them. Make Du'â for their *Hidâyat* (divine guidance), dedication, safety and trouble-free life.

رَبِّ اجْعَلْنِي مُقِيمَ الصَّلَاةِ وَمِن ذُرِّيَّتِي رَبَّنَا وَتَقَبَّلْ دُعَاءِ

"My Lord! Make me an establisher of Salâh and from my children as well. Our Lord! Accept (this) Du'â." *[Sûrah Ibrâhîm verse 40]*

This is a very prominent Du'â frequently recited after Durûd Sharîf in Salâh. The ultimate form of goodwill and benevolence you may shower over your children lies in you making them meticulous of their Salâh. This is why Hadrat Ibrâhîm made Du'â not only for his own children but also for his future descendants. Every Muslim and ideal father should ensure that his wife and children are particular with their Salâh. There are various techniques in accomplishing this objective as coming up in the forthcoming pages. Together with this, the aforementioned Du'â is an excellent Du'â to make. Therefore, make a dedicated effort to recite it frequently.

رَبَّنَا هَبْ لَنَا مِنْ أَزْوَاجِنَا وَذُرِّيَّاتِنَا قُرَّةَ أَعْيُنٍ وَاجْعَلْنَا لِلْمُتَّقِينَ إِمَامًا

"Our Lord! Grant us from amongst our wives and children 'coolness of the eyes' (i.e. comfort), and make us leaders of the *Muttaqîn* (Allah-conscious people)." *[Sûrah Furqân verse 74]*

This is a sacred Du'â mentioned in the Holy Qur'ân. Allâh ﷻ reckons the supplicants of this Du'â from amongst His unique and devout servants. In other words, one of the attributes of the faithful devotees of Allâh ﷻ is the recitation of this Du'â. The 'coolness of the eyes' as mentioned in this Du'â, according to the commentary of Hadrat Hasan Basrî *rahmatullâhi 'alaih*, refers to the delight of the eye a person experiences when he witnesses his family engaged in the obedience of Allâh ﷻ. It would also be correct to include in this meaning, the outward compassion, security and prosperity enjoyed by the wife and children.

The Du'â also reveals that the devoted servants of Allâh ﷻ do not restrict themselves to their own actions and spiritual reformation but they are also concerned about the welfare and character of their wives and children. In an effort to achieve this objective, one should continue making this Du'â.

With regard to the verse 'and make us leaders of the *Muttaqîn* (Allah-conscious people)' some 'Ulamâ say: "Every individual is a natural leader of his wife and children." Therefore, the essence of the Du'â is, "O Allâh! Make my wife and children *Muttaqîs* (Allah-conscious)." Once they become *Muttaqîs*, this person would naturally become the leader of the *Muttaqîn*.

To sum up, the Du'â does not advocate soliciting *Imâmat* and leadership but the objective of the Du'â is to ask Allâh ﷻ to make you such, that people follow you in Dîn and *'Amal* and that your Dîn and *'Amal* benefits them also that you may also reap the reward. Hadrat Makhûl Shâmî *rahmatullâhi 'alaih* says: "The objective of the Du'â is to accomplish an elevated status of *Taqwâ* by means of which even the *Muttaqîs* would benefit from our actions."

For his special servant, Hadrat Anas ﷺ, Rasûlullâh ﷺ prayed in the following words:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اَكْثِرْ مَالَهُ وَوَلَدَهُ وَبَارِكْ لَهُ فِيْمَا اَعْطَيْتَهُ

'O Allâh! Increase his wealth and children and bless him with what You had bestowed upon him." *[Mishkât vol.2 p.575]*

So every Muslim father should make Du'â for his sons and daughters for the goodness of Dîn and *dunyâ*. Pray fervently and sincerely, O Allâh! Render my children committed and sincere Muslims of Your Dîn. Grant them the divine guidance to adhere to the sacred Sunnah of Rasûlullâh ﷺ and keep them steadfast. O Allâh! Utilise them for disseminating the Dîn of Rasûlullâh ﷺ in the entire world. Make them sincere servants of Dîn and grant them the spirit to surrender everything for the sake of Dîn. O Allâh! Render them *'Âlims*, *Hâfizes*, *Dâ'îes* and *Muballighs*. O Allâh! Guide them and employ them to guide others. Keep them safe from the calamities of this world and the next. Let them not be in need of anyone other than You and, O Allâh! Make them pious children. Âmîn.

O Allâh! Embellish our children with the splendour of Îmân. Make them guides and well guided themselves. O Allâh! Increase my knowledge and the knowledge of my children. Guide them and save them from waywardness and defiance and take them into Your distinctive mercy. Verily, you are the greatest of providers. O Allâh! Protect my children and me from the accursed Shaytân. O Allâh! Bestow us with outstanding character and save us from all forms of lewd behaviour.

O Allâh! Adorn my Dîn and the Dîn of my children wherein lies our safety, rectify our *dunyâ* wherein lies our livelihood and resolve our hereafter towards which we are bound to return. Âmîn.

Similarly, taking into account the circumstances, you may make any appropriate Du'â. Beseech Allâh ﷻ. Weep before Him, He will accept your Du'â. Thereafter, you and your

children will enjoy the contentment of this world and the next.

Du'âs are accepted at any given time. There is no predetermined time for its acceptance. However, entreating Allâh ﷻ at the following occasions is more conducive to the acceptance of Du'âs. Therefore, ask of Allâh ﷻ particularly at these times:

1. At the latter part of the night (at Tahajjud time). In fact Allâh ﷻ Himself advises His devotees to ask of Him at this time, as He will surely accept their Du'âs.
2. During the night of Jumu'ah (i.e. between Thursday and Friday night).
3. During the day of Friday.
4. During the night of Qadr.
5. At the time of Azân.
6. In-between Azân and Iqâmah.
7. Immediately after *"Hayya 'Alas-Salâh* and *Hayya 'Alal-Falâh."*
8. At the time of Iqâmah.
9. Whilst travelling in the path of Allâh ﷻ.
10. After the Fard Salâh.
11. Whilst in Sajdah.
12. After the *Tilâwat* (recitation) of the Holy Qur'ân.
13. After the completion of the Holy Qur'ân.
14. On the day of 'Arafât (the 9th of Zul-Hijjah).
15. At the time of *Iftâr* during the Holy month of Ramadân.
16. Whilst it is raining.
17. Whilst drinking Zam-Zam water.
18. At the crowing of a cock.
19. After disbursing charity or after the performance of any good deed.

With utmost humility and submissiveness, beseech Allâh ﷻ on these occasions. If you are unacquainted with any of the Du'âs, read the Du'â *kitâbs* like Hizbul-A'zam, Hisn Hasîn,

Pur Nûr Du'aeń (by Mufti Muhammad Taqî 'Uthmânî Sâhib), Mustanad Majmû'ah Wazâif (compiled by the Ustâds of Madrasah Baitul-'Ilm) etc.

May Allâh ﷻ render us all affectionate and kind to our children and may He make us constantly pray for our children. Âmîn.

Express Gratitude on the Birth of Children

Whether it is a boy or a girl, children are a wonderful *Ni'mat* (boon) of Allâh ﷻ. They are a blessing in terms of the *dunyâ* and in terms of the hereafter. The splendour and bliss of the household lies in the existence of children within its four walls. Children bring in their wake goodness and blessings. They are your successors who will keep your teachings, traditions and memories alive.

They are a blessing in the Dînî (religious) sense as well. If these children are reared within a true Islâmic framework and the same children perform any form of Dînî work, you will also be fully rewarded for whatever they accomplish. If, Allâh ﷻ forbid, one of them dies in infancy or childhood and acknowledging it to be the will of Allâh ﷻ you exercise patience upon this loss, you will be rewarded abundantly. The same child will serve as a shield for his parents from the fire of hell. He will intercede on behalf of his parents and his intercession will be accepted. If you happen to pass away before your children, pious children will prove to be an unremitting source of reward for you right until the last day. Therefore, express your gratitude unto Allâh ﷻ profusely. "O Allâh! I am extremely grateful to You for having bestowed this wonderful blessing upon me. A blessing that cannot be acquired neither with power nor wealth." "O Allâh! Grant me the ability to rear this child to become a *Mujâhid* and *Dâ'î* in your path."

Such an expression of gratitude is a Sunnah of the Ambiyâ and also a divine commandment of Allâh. When Hadrat Zakariyyâ was issued the glad tidings of the birth of Hadrat Yahyâ, he was left dumbfounded. Upon this Allâh responded: "Likewise Allâh does as He pleases." Allâh also commanded him: "Remember your Lord profusely and glorify Him morning and evening."

In other words: "Remember your Lord profusely (with the heart) and glorify Him liberally (with the tongue) at sunset and in the morning as well." *[Ma'âriful-Qur'ân vol.2 p.62]*

Similarly, Ibrâhîm expressed his gratitude thus:
"All praised are due to Allâh Who has bestowed upon me Ismâ'îl and Ishâq in such an old age."

So, if Allâh blesses you with children, instead of engaging in other futile activities, express your gratitude and praise for Allâh. Make Du'â for their strict adherence to Dîn. In actual fact, appreciation or gratitude actually entails utilizing the item in the correct purpose. Allâh has bestowed you with children so that they may be reared religiously, they may be nurtured with an aversion to this transitory world and when they grow up they may sacrifice their lives and wealth for the progress of Dîn throughout the four corners of the world and they are bestowed upon you so that you bring them up as faithful followers of Rasûlullâh. Now when you shove this responsibility upon someone else and the child grows up living for a few coppers of this fleeting world, this is a form of gross ingratitude towards this great blessing of children. May Allâh grant us the true understanding of Dîn and may He grant us the divine guidance to truly appreciate this great blessing. Âmîn.

The Value of Children

The first and foremost right the child has over you is that you at least realise his value and worth. Don't regard his presence an unwieldy burden. Consider him a wonderful blessing of Allâh. If you fail to appreciate his value and worth, you will never be able to fulfil his additional rights.

In order to treat the children correctly, recognising their value is indispensable. Children are a great *Ni'mat* (boon) of Allâh. They are the splendour and the blessing of the household and a source of goodness for the Dîn as well as the dunyâ (world).

As far as Dîn is concerned, they are an unparalleled boon of Allâh. They are a unique assistant and successor to you in matters of Dîn. They are a source of coolness to your eyes and contentment to your heart in Dînî affairs. If you rear them correctly, they would turn out to become guardians of the Dînî traditions and principles. They are a source of disseminating Dîn to the entire universe. They are a source of contentment and comfort to the whole world. This is why Hadrat Zakariyyâ implored Allâh Ta'âlâ in the following words:
"My Lord! Grant me from Thy side pleasant children." *[Sûrah Âl-'Imrân verse 38]*

He also requested Allâh to make his son his successor in Dînî affairs. This is how the Holy Qur'ân describes it:

"So grant me from Your side a special companion who will succeed me and succeed the progeny of Ya'qûb." *[Sûrah Maryam verse 50]*

In other words, render him a legatee of the Dînî *Nûr* (refulgence) originating from the household of Hadrat Ya'qûb (Hadrat Ya'qûb was one of the forebearers of Hadrat Zakariyyâ).

Children are a source of admiration and honour in this world as well as the next. This is why you should rear your children in such a manner that they become disseminators of the Dîn of Rasûlullâh ﷺ and they take pride in sacrificing their lives and wealth in spreading this message to the four corners of the globe.

Your Attitude on the Birth of a Girl

Whether you beget a boy or a girl, you rejoice with joy. It is only natural that you rejoice. In fact you expect your friends and relatives to share in your happiness as well. And this is exactly what happens because Islâm has made you intellectually radiant and the lifestyle of Rasûlullâh ﷺ is before you. In the face of this, it does not behove you to even think about any distinction between a male issue and female issue. Rejoicing over the birth of a boy and mourning over the birth of a girl or to cherish a preference to boys over girls is an un-Islâmic perspective and code of conduct. Our Islâmic society should be liberated from such ideologies and this is generally the case.

Nonetheless, there are still some households that fail to adopt the same attitude between the birth of boys and girls. The heartfelt ecstasy they enjoy at the birth of a boy is visibly lacking at the birth of a girl. The spirit with which one delivers the glad tidings of a boy to his relatives and friends, the same fervour is not employed when delivering glad tidings on the birth of a girl. Similarly, on the birth of a girl, some people congratulate the family in such a manner as though they are chanting a eulogy or as though they are sympathising with them and entreating them to exercise patience.

Now, you judge for yourself. What is the implication of such an attitude? Although the grandmother or aunt of the girl baby will dandle the baby on their knees but in the case of a boy, their whole attitude is different. The families of the girl

lower their heads in shame. They are consoled with words like: "Don't worry! Nobody interferes in the will of Allâh ﷻ. May Allâh ﷻ alter your fortune for the better. Allâh ﷻ has tested you and He will also provide you with the courage to face up to this misfortune." Etc. etc. They claim to love the girl but not with the same passion as they do in the case of a boy. The hopes and aspirations of people tend to be completely distinctive in the case of a boy. Sometimes people undergo a sense of 'misguided shyness' and feel a bit reserved when they have to inform others about the birth of a daughter. How ridiculous! You decide! Does this attitude not contravene the tenets of Islâm? But such is the attitude - advertently or inadvertently - of a number of households. Both men and women are guilty.

The issue of children lies solely in the hands of Allâh ﷻ. Neither a person's intentions nor his aspirations can have any bearing on the outcome of the sex of his children. And only Allâh ﷻ knows if a boy is better for you or a girl. You may make Du'â or cherish the hope of a boy or a girl but your longings will not necessarily be carried out or your Du'âs accepted. It is solely the prerogative of Allâh ﷻ to bestow either a boy or a girl or to deprive you of both altogether. Nobody has the ability to change or alter His decision. He has no partner in power or in authority.

In this regard Allâh ﷻ declares: "He creates whatever He wills. He bestows upon whomsoever He wills a girl and he bestows upon whomsoever He wills a boy and for whomsoever he wishes, he grants both; a boy and a girl and whomsoever He wishes, he makes childless. Verily, He is all-knowing, all-powerful." *[Sûrah Shûrâ verse 49-50]*

In other words, a man's intentions and preferences play no role whatsoever in the creation of Allâh ﷻ. In fact, a person does not even possess knowledge in such issues. Let alone anyone else, even the parents, who are apparent mediums

in the birth of the child, play no active role in the birth of the child. Let alone playing a role, even the mother is unaware of what is transpiring within the confines of her womb. It all comes down to the will of Allâh ﷻ. He gives boys to whomsoever He wishes and girls to whomsoever He wishes. He sometimes gives both boys and girls and sometimes He deprives the parents altogether.

In reference to the bestowal of children in the aforementioned verse, Allâh ﷻ mentions the female issue first and then the male. On the implication of this verse, Hadrat Wâthilah bin Asqa' ؓ says: "A woman who delivers a female child first is very blessed indeed." *[Qurtubî as quoted by Ma'âriful-Qur'ân vol.7 p.712]*

In actual fact, as far as the issue of children is concerned, man is utterly helpless. If he ponders just over this one fact, he will realise that in the entire universe, the will of just one single being is instituted and He has no partner in His divinity. No measure of sainthood or miracles or *ta'wîzes* (amulets) or medical marvels of any sort play a role in the issue of children. Let alone enabling others to get children or let alone enabling others to get males instead of females, even the greatest of saints is unable to create a child according to his liking. If he has no children, all his endeavours in begetting children would amount to naught.

Furthermore, employing whatever academic tools you have at your disposal, you would be unable to determine whether a girl is good for you or a boy. We have witnessed a number of households in which there are girls only, but they are ideals of goodness, comfort and ease whilst other households were proud to have boys only, but each one of them turned out to be a nightmare to the parents. The parents are so despondent with their sons that they refuse to even mention them whilst the parents of the girls are so delighted that they can't stop praising them. In actual fact,

Allâh ﷻ is most conscious of the unseen and only He knows in what lays a person's good fortune and goodness.

A Girl Who Inspired Good Fortune

The wife of Hadrat 'Imrân ﷺ begged Allâh ﷻ to bestow her with a boy whom she vowed to surrender to the devotion of Allâh ﷻ. However, her dejection had no bounds when she gave birth to a girl instead and remarked: "Lord! What is this? How will a girl fulfil the objective of my vow? A boy is unlike a girl. In contrast to a girl, he is free from inherent weaknesses and cultural constraints." However, Allâh ﷻ was well aware of who she gave birth to. She was miserable because she was unable to fulfil the vow she took but little did she realise that the same girl would be a source of good fortune for her and the same girl would uphold her name up to the day of judgement. She had no idea that her name would be preserved in the final divine book and right up to the last day, millions of people would be reciting her name and she would become a grandmother to a high-ranking Nabî like 'Îsâ ﷺ upon whom Allâh ﷻ would reveal the Injîl.

Nonetheless, Allâh ﷻ did not reject the vow made by the wife of Hadrat 'Imrân ﷺ but he conferred upon the girl such a blessing of approval that right up to Qiyâmah this incident will be recited again and again.
Children are a wonderful blessing from Allâh ﷻ. A girl is a blessing as well as a boy. The beneficiary is obliged to appreciate the blessing and express his gratitude unto his benefactor. It definitely does not behove a believer to be ungrateful to the boons of Allâh ﷻ. He is most aware of what to bestow upon whom and under His divine supremacy He upholds judicious judgement. Submitting to His decision and deeming it to be the best, is the characteristic of a true believer.

Every Muslim male and female believes that there is nobody and there never will be a person more superior to the personage of Rasûlullâh ﷺ. He was the doting father of four girls. Hadrat Khadîjah *radiallâhû 'anhâ* - in respect of whom Rasûlullâh ﷺ said that there is no better woman in all the universe than her - was granted the honour of giving birth to these daughters.

Rasûlullâh ﷺ is reported to have advised the Ummah: "Do not despise girls because I myself am a father to girls."

Rasûlullâh ﷺ is also reported to have said that daughters are very loving and a source of blessing. *[Kanzul-'Ummâl vol.16 p.449]*

Hadrat Ibn Shurait ؓ narrates that he heard Rasûlullâh ﷺ saying: "When a girl is born, Allâh ﷻ dispatches the angels to the house who appear and call out: "O dwellers of this household! Assalâmu 'alaykum!" The angels then take the child into the shelter of their wings and whilst caressing the child's head they say: "This is a weak and frail creature that was born out of a weak and frail being. Allâh ﷻ would assist the one who undertakes the responsibility of rearing her right up to the day of judgement." *[Majma-'uz-Zawâid vol.8 p.156]*

A man, who was the father of a number of daughters, was once seated next to Hadrat 'Abdullâh bin 'Umar ؓ when he exclaimed: "How I wish all of them had died." Upon hearing this wish, Hadrat 'Abdullâh bin 'Umar ؓ became extremely furious and retorted: "Are you providing their sustenance?"

There can only be two underlying reasons for expressing disgust on the birth of a girl. The first is that a person regards her existence as a source of embarrassment and humiliation and the second reason is that he dreads their high expenditure.

Now let us analyse the first reason. Each and every Muslim father is horrified of thinking in this manner. A person who hopes to pass his life within the teachings of Islâm and regards the Sunnah of Rasûlullâh ﷺ as the ideal way of life, will he ever be able to imagine that a girl is a source of shame and embarrassment especially when Rasûlullâh ﷺ himself was the father of a number of daughters and he assured us that a daughter is a shield from the fire of Jahannam.

Analyse the second reason. Not even for a moment would you admit that a Muslim can harbour such an irrational thought. How can a person who regards Allâh ﷻ as the sole provider, ever entertain the insecurity of who is going to provide for the child. The Muslim who truly believes in all the attributes of Allâh ﷻ also believes that the Sustainer and Provider is Allâh ﷻ Alone. He provides sustenance for every child. The child comes to the world with his own sustenance.

What right does a person have to claim that he is providing for someone when he himself is provided for by Allâh ﷻ and he himself is in total need of Allâh ﷻ? We can never say what is allotted to whom. We have no idea; perhaps this weak and feeble girl brings with her a very powerful stroke of good fortune. It is not far-fetched to imagine that this feeble and weak child brings along with it not only its own sustenance but perhaps it would bring along winds of fortune in your favour as well.

Appointing you the guardian of a weak girl, Allâh ﷻ has done a great favour unto you. It is such a favour that if you grasp its importance you would be overwhelmed with the ardour of gratitude. Jannah that has been shrouded with difficulties and trials and whose pathway is strewn with obstacles, Allâh ﷻ has rendered it easy for you. As a father of a girl, Allâh ﷻ has naturally developed the love for her in

your heart and innately also you are obligated to treat her favourably and shower her with paternal affection.

Rasûlullâh ﷺ has testified that an affectionate relationship with the daughter acts as a shield from the fire of Jahannam and it also paves the way towards Jannah. May Allâh ﷻ grant us also the proper understanding. Âmîn.

A Daughter – Jannah of the Parents

If you are the father of a daughter, you are exceptionally fortunate. Allâh Ta'âlâ has awarded you the supervision of your own Jannah. So now it is your own responsibility either to safeguard it or to destroy it. Rasûlullâh ﷺ has issued glad tidings to the effect that if you fulfil the rights of rearing a daughter, Jannah is incumbent upon you.

Hadrat Jâbir ؓ narrates that Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "He who has three daughters, he takes good care of them, attends to their needs and is affectionate towards them, Jannah is incumbent upon him." One of the clansmen enquired: "O Prophet of Allâh! Will he get the same reward if he has just two daughters?" Rasûlullâh ﷺ replied: "Even if he has two, he will get the same reward." *[Al-Adabul-Mufrad p.15]*

A similar Hadîth is recorded in *Mishkât* narrated by Hadrat 'Abdullâh bin 'Abbâs ؓ. He comments that if the people had to ask about one daughter, surely he would have issued the same glad tidings even for one daughter.

Islâm has drawn special attention towards the rearing of daughters and has encouraged their upbringing by promising great rewards in the hereafter.

A girl is a weak and vulnerable creation of Allâh ﷻ. Even after years of rearing and care there is no hope that she will be able to materialistically compensate her parents nor will she earn anything in the future. In fact, there is not much

hope of her even serving her parents because the moment she is suitably skilled in serving them, she is dispatched to serve someone else. In difficult times, she is unable to defend the family. In view of these conditions, if the Islâmic teachings are not before us, perhaps the parents would fail dismally in fulfilling her rights or perhaps they would hesitate at showering her with abundant love. Perhaps they would not accord her the status she deserves. This is why there is a need to consistently recap on the rights and upbringing of daughters as distinctively sanctioned by Islâm.

An Enviable Recompense

Hadrat Anas ؓ reports that Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "He who brings up two daughters until they reached puberty and they were married off, on the day of judgement he and I will be like this." He then indicated with two fingers close together. *[Sahîh Muslim vol.2 p.330]*

What better fortune can the Muslim parents enjoy than the companionship of Rasûlullâh ﷺ on the day of judgement? In the aforementioned Hadîth, Rasûlullâh ﷺ uses the words "until they reach". This is a very expressive statement. One meaning is - as mentioned above - "until they reach puberty" and another meaning of it is "until they reach their objectives". In other words, until she reaches her own home and is in the care of her husband.

There are a number of virtues in rearing daughters and it is difficult to mention all of them here. Some of them were mentioned in the aforementioned Ahâdîth. Nonetheless, we wish to draw attention to the fact that only the person who rears them in accordance with the teachings of Hadrat Fâtimah, Zainab, Umme Kulthûm and Ruqayyah *radiallâhû 'anhun* is eligible for these virtues. In other words, he gives preference to their Islâmic education and he provides them with a bit of necessary secular education as well. Furthermore, the medium of education should be Islâmic as

well, otherwise the moral degeneration of the present co-ed system of education is not a mystery to anyone.

Similarly, try and implement *Hijâb* (Pardah) from an early age. Start her off with *Hijâb* when she is about nine or ten years old because the conditions facing our society today are evident to everybody. So, why allow your beloved daughter to be a source of tongue-wagging or evil thoughts in other people's hearts? Remember that all the people of the world are the same as far as providing food, clothing and shelter to the children is concerned, Muslim and non-Muslim alike. The actual distinction lies in the manner of upbringing.

A Muslim rears his children in such a manner that they become obedient to Allâh ﷻ and they make submission to Allâh ﷻ the objective of their lives. Rearing of children in itself is not Dîn since even non-Muslims rear children. Yes, rearing them in the manner revealed to us by Rasûlullâh ﷺ is Dîn and a rewardable action. Encourage your daughters to cover their heads from a very early age. When children sit at the *Dastarkhân* (tablecloth), encourage the boys to wear a *topî* and the girls a scarf etc. When they (girls) step out of home, ensure that their hair is not exposed. Make sure that they don't participate in any form of recreation with their maternal and paternal male cousins. They should rather play with their female cousins. Prevent them from reading immoral literature, romance and other such novels.

Marrying Off Daughters - The Virtues

A Muslim father should not regard the education, expenditure, rearing and marrying off of his children as a burden on his shoulders. He should not be distressed over such issues especially when it comes to marrying off his daughters. With an attitude of cool composure, he should fulfil all the aforementioned obligations taking into account their virtues mentioned in the Ahâdîth. He should pacify his

wife as well. He should enlighten her with the bounties in store for people who go through these concerns and anxieties. For this reason, it has been narrated in the Hadîth by Hadrat Abû Sa'îd ؓ that Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "He who rears three daughters, inculcates good morals in them and then marries them off and treats them well, for him is Jannah." *[Abû Dâwûd vol.2 p.345 Kitâbul Adab]*

Succour to a Dependant Daughter

Rasûlullâh ﷺ is reported to have said: "Should I not inform you about the most superior form of charity? Maintenance of and succour to your daughter who has returned to you and she has nobody else except you to take care of her." *[Ibn Mâjah p.269, Jam'ul-Fawâid, Bâbu Birril Awlâd]*

The Hadîth refers to a daughter who has returned home to her parents either because her husband has died and there is nobody at her in-law's to care for her or her husband has divorced her for some reason or the other and she returned home. Nonetheless, the Hadîth also includes the daughter who is unable to marry or she is not marriageable. For instance, she may be mentally or emotionally instable, or she may be physically handicapped or she is not the marriageable type. Whatever the reason, maintaining such a helpless daughter is also an act of immense reward. In the eyes of Allâh ﷻ, spending on her is the most superior form of charity.

Some households do take back their divorced or widowed daughters but her sisters-in-law, brothers, sisters and occasionally the parents also taunt or ridicule the poor woman to a point of intolerable anguish. Don't ever conduct yourself in this manner. Is this not the same woman whose unconventional behaviour you were never tired of when she was a little girl? Is she not the same girl you were always willing to please? Now when she comes broken-hearted to your door, why add to her anguish? For Allâh's sake, why don't you then get her married to a suitable and religious

man? If this is not possible, allocate her a separate room in the house. If possible, put up a separate kitchen for her as well so that she doesn't come into much contact with her sisters-in-law and brothers etc. Unnecessary contact with them will surely resurrect old gripes. Be certain that such a stance will certainly guarantee you great rewards in the court of Allâh ﷻ.

Preferential Treatment between Boys and Girls

Hadrat 'Abdullâh bin 'Abbâs ؓ narrates that Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "He who begets a daughter and refrains from burying her alive like in the days of (pre-Islâmic) ignorance and does not denounce her nor does he give his sons preference over her, Allâh ﷻ will admit him into Jannah."
[Abû Dâwûd p.344]

In the aforementioned Hadîth, Rasûlullâh ﷺ has based the parent's entry into Jannah on three factors:

1. They do not bury the girl alive and grant her the right to life.
2. They do not denounce nor condemn her.
3. They do not discriminate against her in favour of the male children.

In some households, the degree of value and merit enjoyed by boys varies from that conferred to girls. The kindness and favourable affiliation with which the sons and their wives are indulged varies from that of the daughters and their husbands. Actually, this discrimination in favour of boys is based upon the ideology that girls are reared for someone else whilst boys are reared for one's own gain. They believe that they can't pin any hope on their daughters whilst the sons are the 'powerhouses' of all their hopes.

Daughters are bound to adorn and inhabit another household whilst sons are destined to adorn and populate the homes of their own parents. The inevitable outcome of

this thinking is that the fervour and zeal with which a boy is reared, the daughter is deprived off the corresponding zeal and fervour. In the upbringing or treatment of the daughter, the concept of a 'sense of duty' is applied but her upbringing lacks the corresponding spirit, passion and zeal employed in the treatment and upbringing of sons.

A girl is normally despised by the seniors of her home and by her family as well. Within the home, her brothers are given preference over her and within the family members too, the son enjoys greater merit than her. Parents quite often do not give the same clothing, jewellery etc. to their daughter as they give to their daughter-in-law. Whatever they give to the daughter-in-law, they give with enthusiasm and zeal as she is destined to adorn their own house whereas they give the daughter merely to fulfil their sense of obligation or to maintain their status in society. They remember what they give to the daughter but tend to forget what they give to the daughter-in-law.

In such households, the daughter's children also do not get the same compassion and love as the son's children enjoy. The son's children are considered one's own whilst the daughter's children are regarded as someone else's children. In front of family and acquaintances, the son's children are presented as children of the family and they (the kinfolk) are expected to treat them as such whilst the daughter's children are neither presented as family members nor are they expected to be treated as family. The same applies to the kinsfolk. They don't treat the daughter's offspring as they do to the son's offspring.

The aforementioned Hadîth cautions the parents not to conduct themselves in this manner, as this is a loathsome act. The means of acquiring Jannah and the pleasure of Allâh ﷻ lies in the parents treating their male and female offspring in the same manner. They should treat the girl with the same importance as they treat the boy. They

should grant the girl the same respect and admiration they accord to the boy. They should not be prejudiced in favour of the boy. They should always give preference to the dictates of Dīn over their own impulses and over the traditions and customs of society.

A Daughter – A Shield from the Fire of Hell

Hadrat 'Âishah *radiallâhû 'anhâ* narrates: "Once, a lady together with her two young daughters, came begging to me. Apart from a single date I had nothing else to give her. I gave her the date, which she took, and splitting it into two parts she offered a piece to each one of them whilst she herself didn't even taste the date. A little while later, she departed. When Rasûlullâh ﷺ returned home, I related the whole incident to him. To this Rasûlullâh ﷺ remarked: 'He who has been put through any form of ordeal because of daughters but maintains them favourably and kindly, they (the daughters) would be a shield for him from the fire of Hell." *[Riyâdus Sâlihîn p.144, Tirmidhî vol.2 p.13]*

Understandably, there may not be much materialistic hope attached to a daughter in this world but parents who have faith in the truthfulness of Rasûlullâh ﷺ and the certainty of the last day and they treat their daughter well, what better motivation do they require than the fact that the same daughter will act as a safeguard for them against the blazing fire of Jahannam?

A man once came to Rasûlullâh ﷺ with a child in his lap. Out of affection, the man started pinching the boy. When Rasûlullâh ﷺ caught sight of this, he asked: "Are you kind and sympathetic to this child?" The man replied: "Surely, why not." To this Rasûlullâh ﷺ responded: "Allâh ﷻ is much more compassionate to you than you are to this child because He is the most merciful of the merciful."
[Al-Adabul-Mufrad Bâbu Rahmatil-'Ayâl]

'Aqîqah

Performance of 'Aqîqah for the children is *Masnûn* (Sunnah). Rasûlullâh ﷺ performed 'Aqîqah for his children and even encouraged others to do the same. However, it should be borne in mind that 'Aqîqah is not a Fard obligation but only a Mustahab (admirable) form of charity. There is no sin if omitted. If the father can afford it, it is better to carry out the 'Aqîqah as this is a form of an offering in aid of the child's life. The performance of 'Aqîqah wards off misfortune and protects the child from all forms of calamities.

Rasûlullâh ﷺ is reported to have said: "Every child is pawned against his 'Aqîqah. On the seventh day, perform his 'Aqîqah. On the same day, keep his name and remove his hair." *[Jâm'i Tirmidhi vol.1 p.278]*

'Aqîqah actually refers to the animal slaughtered on the seventh day of a newborn baby as a form of charity. If possible, for a boy two goats and for a girl just one may be slaughtered. However, it is not necessary to slaughter two goats for a boy. Even one will suffice. Since this is an offering in aid of the child's life and the child's life is pawned against the 'Aqîqah, it is meritorious to carry out this sacrifice provided one can afford to do so.

Hadrat 'Alî ؓ narrates that Rasûlullâh ﷺ slaughtered a goat as 'Aqîqah on the birth of Hadrat Hasan ؓ. He then addressed Hadrat Fâtimah *radiallâhû 'anhâ* saying: "Remove all his hair and give silver to the weight of his hair in charity." Hadrat 'Alî ؓ says: "We weighed his hair and found it to be about a Dirham (± 3.2 grams) or slightly less in weight." *[Jâm'i Tirmidhi vol.1 p.278]*

On the basis of this Hadîth, we conclude that even one goat will suffice for a boy. If someone can afford two, by all means he may perform the 'Aqîqah of two but bear in mind that two are not necessary, one may also suffice.

The 'Aqîqah should be carried out on the seventh day. If this was not possible for some reason or the other, it may be done on the fourteenth or the twenty-first day. It may also be carried out even after this time.

The performance of 'Aqîqah is a Sunnah. Hence, the ceremony should be carried out with simplicity and the least amount of fuss. Finally, we would like to emphasise that all persons may partake of the 'Aqîqah animal. The belief that the grandmother may not partake of the meat is ludicrous and is not established from the Hadîth.

Khatnah (Circumcision)

Khatnah is a Sunnah of all the Ambiyâ and it is also a distinguishing feature of Islâm. Hadrat Abû Hurayrah reports that Rasûlullâh said: "Five things are *Fitrah* (natural): circumcision, removal of pubic hair, plucking of the hair of the armpits, clipping the moustache and paring the nails." *[Al-Adabul Mufrad p.188]*

Fitrah in the aforementioned Hadîth refers to a person's untarnished disposition. In other words, these five things are requisites of cleanliness, purity and gracious disposition. These things are incorporated into the disposition of man provided he has not tarnished this disposition with deviant behaviour. All five things have remained the Sunnah of the Ambiyâ and all religions have been implementing these Sunnats. As though these Sunnats are integrated within the nature upon which Allâh has created man.

If the child is not very weak, it is better to carry out the *Khatnah* (circumcision) on the seventh day. There are two advantages in doing it on this day; firstly, the child's skin is soft and thin. It will heal quickly. Secondly, the Sunnah of performing the *Khatnah* on the seventh day, as indicated in the Hadîth of Rasûlullâh, is also implemented.

Hadrat Salmân bin 'Âmir says that he heard Rasûlullâh saying: "Aqîqah (should be performed) on the birth of the child. Shed blood on his behalf and eliminate all impurities etc. from him." *[Tirmidhî vol.1 p.278]*

"Elimination of impurities" refers to shaving of the hair, cleansing the child etc. Some 'Ulamâ are of the opinion that it also refers to *Khatnah* as this is also a form of removing all impurity and dirt from the body.

Hence, *Khatnah* is preferable on the seventh day. If, for some reason or the other, this is not possible, it should be done within forty days at least. If not, then whenever it is possible. However, keep in mind two things; don't delay unduly and secondly, this Sunnah should be carried out without pomp and ceremonial rituals. If affordable, one may feed his friends and relatives out of joy of implementing this Sunnah. However, giving it a form of some ritualistic ceremony or to spend ostentatiously is not sanctioned by Sharî'ah. Self-afflicted burdens and obligations are tantamount to violation of Shar'î regulations.

It is best to carry out this Sunnah in a simple manner without undue annoyance or inconvenience. Nonetheless, if Allâh has bestowed you with affluence and Allâh has given you the opportunity to carry out this Sunnah, you may invite a few people over to meals or you may distribute sweets etc. There is no problem with this.

Hadrat Sâlim says that when Ibn 'Umar (Sâlim's father) performed his and Na'îm's *Khatnah* he slaughtered a sheep. He says: "Amongst us kids, the fact that a sheep was slaughtered for us, was a source of immense joy and pride." *[Al-Adabul Mufrad p.182]*

However, great care should be exercised that such occasions do not turn out to become ceremonial customs. It should not be such that due to the high costs involved, a simple

Sunnah turns out to become a terrible ordeal for the Ummah.

Breastfeeding

It is not but natural that proper breastfeeding also falls within the ambit of childrearing. It is the right of the child as well as an obligation of motherhood for a mother to breastfeed her child. Breastfeeding the child is an acknowledged social obligation of the mother and every mother regards it as a maternal obligation.

Bearing a child, giving birth to him and rearing him is a natural inclination of every mother. Owing to this natural inclination, she fulfils this obligation wholeheartedly and enthusiastically. She considers it a right of the child to place him to her breast and rear him conscientiously.

The Holy Qur'ân says: "Mothers feed their children for two complete years. (This period is) for he who wishes to complete (the period) of breastfeeding."

The milk of the mother is an intrinsic right of the child. The child is not only the offspring of the father but also the darling of the mother. So the mother should not vent her anger with the father over her children. She should not be vindictive and violate the rights of the child. Breastfeeding has always been a time-honoured custom within mankind. It is more of a yearning found in the very nature of a woman. In fact, this natural inclination is found amongst animals as well. The ardour and devotion by which the mothers lovingly breastfeed their sinless children is vital and a time-honoured tradition.

This is why the Holy Qur'ân has mentioned this just as a matter of endorsement, encouragement and approval. The fact that Allâh ﷻ endorses breastfeeding in the Holy Qur'ân is impetus enough for a Muslim mother to fulfil this

responsibility with distinction, dedication and a sense of earnestness. Apart from this, she understands the great reward and glad-tidings issued by Allâh ﷻ and His Rasûl ﷺ for discharging this great responsibility. Therefore, if the mother has no excuse, the father should insist the mother breastfeeds the child. This is healthier for the child and at the same time, the parents will be rewarded for every drop of milk the child drinks right up to the age of two years.

When his youngest son, Hadrat Ibrâhim ﵁, was born, the good news was conveyed to Rasûlullâh ﷺ by his slave Abû Râfi'. Out of joy, Rasûlullâh ﷺ immediately set him free. On the seventh day, Rasûlullâh ﷺ carried out the 'Aqîqah and shaved off his hair. He then gave silver equivalent to the weight of the hair in charity. A number of Ansârî women offered to breastfeed the child. Rasûlullâh ﷺ chose Hadrat Khawlah bint Zaid Ansâriyyah *radiallâhû 'anhâ* to carry out this task. He handed over the child to her and he reimbursed her with some dates. *[Sîratun-Nabî by 'Allâmah Shiblî N'umânî Vol. 2 p. 258]*

Nonetheless, the father should be cautious when requesting the mother to breastfeed the child. If the mother's milk is detrimental to the child – perhaps as a result of some medication – or she has become weak due to childbirth and she is incapable of breastfeeding, the father should not compel her to breastfeed the child. Sometimes, people presume her feebleness to be a mere excuse and insist that she breastfeeds. This leads to endless squabbles and rows.

Always remember that the mother has a far greater degree of love than you. If she refuses to breastfeed, it may be more beneficial to the child. A weak mother generally doesn't produce much milk and even if she does produce, the milk may be of an inferior quality. This is detrimental to the child. In the long run, the child's poor health will subsequently be taxing upon you as the father. In such conditions, where the mother is unable to breastfeed the child, you should ensure that she refrains from

breastfeeding. Furthermore, follow the advice of your lady doctor.

Parents, especially the father should ensure that the mother (his wife) does not fall pregnant again right until the child is two years of age. Medical practitioners have advised that if the mother avoids falling pregnant whilst breastfeeding, her milk supply is abundant and nutritious. This promises physical well-being and proper upbringing for the child.

Pregnancy adversely affects the nutritional value of the milk. This may trigger off a number of paediatric illnesses. Hence, as far as possible, utilise some form of (permitted) contraception or the other right until the child is two years of age. After all, it is the child's right to drink right up to the age of two.

The Status of *Shukr* (Gratitude) in Jannah

If a child dies whilst the parents are alive and upon this agonising experience, they exercise patience as well as gratitude with the intention that Allâh ﷻ will reward them for reclaiming His trust, this anguish will be a source of magnificent fortune in Jannah and a means of honour and privilege in the hereafter.

Hadrat Mûsâ 'Ash'arî ؓ narrates that Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: *"When a child dies, Allâh ﷻ asks the angels: "Have you seized the soul of My servant's child?" They reply in the affirmative. Again He asks them: "Have you seized a part of his heart?" Again they reply in the affirmative. Allâh ﷻ then asks: "What was the reaction of My servant?" They reply: "He had praised You and recited: "Innâ Lillâhî Wa Innâ Ilayhi Râji'ûn". Upon this Allâh ﷻ commands them: "Erect a house for my servant in Jannah and name it Baitul-Hamd (the abode of praise)."* *[Mishkât Vol.1 p.151]*

Imâm Tabrânî ؒ narrates on the basis of a reliable chain of narrators on the authority of Umme-Habîbah *radiallâhu*

'anhâ. She says: "I was in the company of Hadrat 'Âishah *radiallâhu 'anhâ* when Rasûlullâh ﷺ appeared before us and said: "When two Muslims (a couple) lose three children who haven't as yet reached the age of puberty, they will be brought right to the door of Jannah on the day of judgement and told to enter therein. They will say: "We will not enter until our parents enter." It will then be said: "You and your parents enter Jannah."

Child Neglect – A Vile Transgression

Rasûlullâh ﷺ is reported to have warned: "A man's disregard for those he feeds (his family) is sufficient to render him sinful." *[Riyâdus-Sâlihîn p.117, narrated by 'Abdullâh bin 'Amr bin 'Âs ؓ]*

If a person is neglectful of those placed under his care or he maltreats them, it is such an appalling transgression that just this single sin is sufficient to declare him a sinful and disobedient person in the eyes of Allâh ﷻ. This negligence can take a number of forms. For instance; he spends lavishly to boost his prestige but he is absolutely unmindful of the children's rights, or he indulges himself and his friends to sumptuous meals but his children are living in abject poverty, or due to his flawed understanding of Dîn, he spends in other charitable causes whilst oblivious to the needs of his own children.

The Most Excellent Form of Charity

Hadrat Abû Hurayrah ؓ reports that Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "You spend a guinea in the path of Allâh Ta'âlâ, a guinea in assisting in the emancipation of a slave, you give a guinea to a destitute as charity and you spend a guinea upon the members of your family. The greatest reward you will receive will be for spending the guinea upon your wife and children." *[Riyâdus Sâlihîn p.123 from Sahîh Muslim]*

A similar Hadîth is further expounded in the narration of Hadrat Thaubân ﷺ. He says that Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "The best guinea is that which a man spends upon his wife and children and the guinea he spends upon the conveyance engaged in the path of Allâh ﷻ, and the guinea he spends upon the warriors in the path of Allâh ﷻ." Abû Qulâbah (one of the narrators of this Hadîth) says: "Rasûlullâh ﷺ commenced with the spending upon one's family." He then goes on to say: "Who is more entitled to a greater reward than the one who spends on his young children? He spends on them so that they desist from begging and they are better off." *[Jâmi' Tirmidhî, Abwâbul-Birr p.18]*

Whilst spending on your children, your intention should be solely to please Allâh ﷻ. Do not spend with the notion that today I will be spending on them and tomorrow they will be spending upon me. Do no be under the illusion that your spending upon them is a profitable investment, the fruit of which you will enjoy in old age. This is a very lowly and crude intention. The best is to form an intention that I am spending upon the children whatever has been provided by Allâh ﷻ solely to gain His pleasure. I am spending upon them because whatever good actions they perform when they grow up will be a source of perpetual reward for me in the hereafter.

The Father whose Face will shine like the Full Moon

Hadrat Abû Hurayrah ﷺ narrates that Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "The person who earns from Halâl sources to protect his children from stretching out their hands before others or as a provision for his family members or to do a good turn to his neighbour, he will meet Allâh ﷻ on the day of judgement with his face glittering like the full moon. On the other hand, the person who earns Halâl just to vie with others or to demonstrate his financial supremacy over others or merely

for purposes of ostentation, he will meet Allâh ﷻ whilst Allâh Ta'âlâ is displeased with him." *[Kanzul-'Ummâl vol.4 p.12]*

Ponder over it. Earning the *dunyâ* (material things) for one's children is also a source of reward. Therefore, no matter what hardships you have to contend with, cherish the hope of reward in the hereafter. Of course, whilst engaged in business or employment, ensure that you perform your Salâh promptly with Jamâ'at. Furthermore, to bring your business or employment up to scratch, study the book *'Muttaqî Aur Dâ'î Tâjir'* by the 'Ulamâ of Baitul-'Ilm.

The responsibility of guardianship entails bearing all the essential needs of the child right up to his maturity. These, amongst others, include the costs involved in his birth, his food and clothing expenditure, the costs involved in his care, education, health and other conveniences. Also, the cost involved in getting him breastfed if anyone other than his mother is feeding him or, Allâh ﷻ forbid, if the mother is divorced and she feeds the child, the father is obliged to recompense her. In short, the father is religiously liable for all costs involved in rearing and nurturing the child. Should the father be affluent, he is compelled to pay the *Sadaqatul-Fitr* on behalf of the child as well. Moreover, he is advised to perform 'Aqîqah on behalf of the child.

By instilling paternal love in the heart of the father, Allâh ﷻ has done a great favour upon the father as well as the children. Without this natural love and affection, rearing children merely as a paternal obligation would have been a rather burdensome task and very few people would have executed this obligation. Subsequently, child rearing would have become a great social dilemma and children would have been deprived of correct upbringing. It is also a great favour of Allâh ﷻ upon the children that He has fostered love and affection in the hearts of the parents. As a result of this parental love, they fulfil this obligation with pleasure and satisfaction.

The Muslim father rears his children also because he has a natural love for them. Together with this, he realises that rearing children is also a religious obligation. He understands that Allâh ﷻ has entrusted these children to his care. By spending on his children, the father appeases his paternal instincts and on top of that he hopes that Allâh ﷻ will reward him abundantly in the hereafter.

A spirit of innate paternal love coupled with this passionate impulse of hope of reward in the hereafter makes this task extremely simple and satisfying. The Muslim father executes this responsibility as a form of 'Ibâdah to improve his lot in the *Âkhirah* (hereafter) and to be appreciated in the eyes of Allâh ﷻ. In spite of the difficulties he faces in rearing his children and in the face of a multitude of problems, the father is still content to carry out his obligations because he considers the fulfilment of this obligation as the *Taufîq* (divine guidance) of Allâh ﷻ. In fact, he is grateful to Allâh ﷻ for allowing him to honour the trust placed upon him. By spending upon the children, he regards this as spending in the path of Allâh ﷻ.

Hadrat Abû Mas'ûd Al-Badrî ؓ narrates that Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "When a person spends upon his family for the pleasure of Allâh in anticipation of reward in the hereafter, this (spending) is a (form of) charity for him." *[Riyâdus-Sâlihîn p.152]*

"In anticipation of reward" mentioned in the above Hadîth refers to spending solely for the pleasure of Allâh ﷻ and also for obtaining the reward of the hereafter. He has no other objective in mind.

At this point we wish to clarify that whilst spending on your children, make sure you do not spend a single penny from Harâm sources otherwise the adage 'a good turn repaid by evil' will aptly apply to you. Furthermore, the intention

ought to be the pleasure of Allâh ﷻ and not for pomp and show. Moreover, one should abstain from spending in useless ceremonies like birthday parties etc. If the children and mother insist, counsel them with love and affection. Explain to them that there is no scope in Islâm for such futile rituals. Apart from the material loss of this world, such celebrations also bring about loss in the hereafter. Instead of spending our money on a birthday party, would it not be better to spend the same on a poor orphan's education? At least this will eradicate illiteracy and ignorance from society to some extent. The most severe evil attached to this is that it reeks of emulation of the Kuffâr, which attracts the wrath of Allâh ﷻ. The anger of Allâh ﷻ is detrimental in this world as well as the next.

Maintenance – The Father's Responsibility

Divide your Allâh-bestowed wealth into three parts; spend one part in the dissemination of Dîn, one part upon your wife and children and the last part for your own comforts and also for assisting your family members and the poor and needy. Spending upon the children is not just a matter of worldly motivation but it is in fact the actual requirement of Dîn. The Dîn instructs us to fulfil the children's requirements first. Hence, this cannot be termed worldliness but rather this is religiousness. In principle, the ideal form of charity is when a person remains affluent even after giving charity without putting the children into any form of difficulty.

It is a matter of sheer lack of Dînî understanding that a person keeps his own children in poverty-stricken conditions, he counts and measures when he gives to them but for fame and name or for his personal luxuries, he spends lavishly and generously. The most deserving of your wealth are your beloved children even if they are not the children of your present wife. Perhaps they are the children of your previous wife who, for some reason or the other, is separated from you. Whatever the case may be, they are

after all, your children. You live a life of opulence and luxury or you spend lavishly upon everyone else but your own children are in dire straits. This is not fair and an infringement of their rights. You may spend generously on others as well. This is also commendable. However, Rasûlullâh ﷺ advises you to fulfil the requirements of your children first.

Rasûlullâh ﷺ is reported to have said: "The best form of charity is that which maintains a person's affluence even after he gives charity. And spend first upon those in your charge." *[Mishkât Bâbu Fadlis-Sadaqah narrated by Hadrat Abû Hurayrah ؓ and Hadrat Hakîm bin Hizâm ؓ p.170]*

In this Hadîth, a father would discover a rational, moderate and natural approach to fatherhood. It is only an innate desire of every father that his children benefit from his wealth and they live a comfortable life. This is also one of the primary motivators of earning wealth and this is also the most favoured disbursement. Islâm very acutely endorses charity and almsgiving. In fact, Islâm declares charity as a requirement of Îmân whilst miserliness has been proclaimed as a symbol of hypocrisy. However, at the same token, it advocates spending firstly upon those you are charged with.

Neglecting the needs of children, whilst lavishly spending upon one's whims and fancies or to hoard one's wealth whilst spending tight-fistedly upon them or even to keep them in the dark about one's amassed fortune, is irrational and ludicrous.

Similarly, within your financial means, spend upon your children generously. Avoid reproaching them repeatedly and do not scold or humiliate them by asking them to account for every single penny. If they are wont of spending in the right places, encourage them and if they are inclined to spend in the wrong places, advise them again and again. Taking his age into account, give him a bit of pocket money as well. However, don't be overwhelmed with a spirit of

generosity and give him so much pocket-money when he is very young that it adversely affects his or other children's morals and habits.

Hence, adopt a very moderate stance and maintain a fine line between the degree of miserliness and extravagance. Neither spend in such a manner that the child is reduced to a spoilt brat nor be so frugal that your young married children look forward to your death. Unwarranted criticism or to humiliate the child repeatedly in front of his siblings makes him look forward to the death of his father. The father should contemplate over the fact that after his death, everything will inevitably belong to the wife and children. So I should advise my children in such a manner that my words carry some weight whilst they gain some guidance from my counsel and not that it causes them more anguish than anything else.

Furthermore, refrain from spending in sinful avenues and prohibit them from the same. Explain to them the worldly and spiritual harms of spending in sinful avenues. Also, enlighten them about the individual and socio-economic disadvantages of spending in such avenues so that they may refrain from frittering their money in such places. However, bear in mind that children can never be moulded within the exact constitution of the father. If the father is frugal, perhaps the children will be spendthrifts or vice versa. Whatever the case, in both instances, an intelligent father should lower his standards whilst attempting to raise the standard of the children at the same time. In other words, he should moderate his expectations and be content and strive to keep the children happy as well.

Similarly, whilst spending on them, the father's intention should be the pleasure of Allâh ﷻ. This is technically referred to as *istihzâr* (presence of mind) in the terminology of the Sharî'ah. Owing to the presence of this intention, the reward of spending on one's family is doubled. Obviously all parents

spend on their children but if they make the appropriate intention whilst doing so, the advantages are doubled.

Occasionally a person has lunch with his friends or he goes out to eat in one of the restaurants with his acquaintances. He has no qualms about footing the exorbitant bill and in fact he makes every effort to outdo his friends in paying the bill. At such a moment, every father should realise that his true friends are his wife and children. Do I spend as lavishly as this on my wife and children? Do I ever expect to be rewarded by Allâh ﷻ for spending upon them?

Good Conduct with Children

The most important right of the child is that you show kindness towards him. You are affectionate and warm towards him. You are conscious of his comfort and well-being. You are receptive of his sentiments and emotions. You strive to maintain his happiness. You abstain from doing anything that would break his heart or dampen his spirits and you refrain from actions that degrade his self-esteem or injure his pride.

Your small and innocent children stare at you with eyes of affectionate longing. They are Allâh's ﷻ gift unto you. Express gratitude unto Allâh ﷻ and abstain from any form of ingratitude. Cherish your children and approach them in a manner they deserve.

Children are a trust from Allâh ﷻ. So safeguard this trust. Treat them in such a manner that they turn out to become someone worthwhile and a source of mercy for mankind and a source of honour for yourself and a source of fulfilment in the hereafter. If you refrain from conducting yourself in a favourable manner you are guilty of being unjust to your self, unkind to the children and unfair to society on the whole.

Getting into a rage of fury over every trivial issue, yelling, scolding, reprimanding, using foul language, calling names like useless and stupid, getting upset over their mischievousness and waywardness, swearing them, taunting, unwarranted sternness, inflicting hardship on them, denying them the opportunity to play and express joy and other such behaviour is cruel and inhumane. The aftermath of such behaviour is bound to be exceptionally distressing, not only for the children but for the parents and society as well.

When the children are young, weak and immature, they deserve your love and affection. They need your affectionate sympathy, your assistance and your guidance. Now, under your care, instead of these three blessings, they are subjected to your anger, harshness and wrath, they will become dispirited and disgusted with you. They will stay far removed from you and try to flee from home. The moment they detect a whiff of these three blessings, they are bound to dart forth. Children are unable to distinguish between genuine love and feigned love. Yes, they can distinguish between sincerity and deception. The uncouth and irreligious scum of society are provided an opportunity to lure such children into their disgusting snares of deceit and the same children subsequently become a matter of grave concern for society and they are inclined to commit a number of vicious crimes.

If these children are fortunate enough to be delivered from the clutches of these scums, then too these children will prove to be a headache for their parents. They will not enjoy a healthy relationship with their parents. Due to the maltreatment and harshness of the parents, the children's hearts will be devoid of the wholesome emotions and chaste feelings normally experienced by other fortunate children. The parents lament about the disobedience and incapability of the children but the parents' maltreatment and harshness was the most decisive factor in their rebelliousness and

defiance. They lay the blame entirely on the shoulders of the children but the parents are just as guilty in the impairment of their children.

The third detrimental outcome of this is that such children tend to have the most profane morals. They are generally deprived of the morals that enable a person to achieve something of value or to carry out some memorable feat in the Dîn or *dunyâ*. They are generally lacking in morals like self-confidence, valour, courage, self-restraint, magnificence, fortitude, morality, cheerfulness, communicative skills etc. Instead of these virtues, they fall prey to contemptible tendencies like peevishness, narrow-mindedness, inferiority, miserliness, meanness, haughtiness and arrogance. They tend to regard themselves as contemptible, worthless and insignificant and they strive to enshroud these deficiencies by demonstrating their importance in a number of ways.

If you are really your children's well-wisher, fulfil their rights and conduct yourself with them as you would hope them to conduct themselves with you. Only then will the following Du'â emanate from the depths of their hearts:

رَبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيَانِي صَغِيرًا

"O Allâh! Shower Thy mercy upon them (parents) as they had reared me in childhood." *[Sûrah Bani Isrâîl verse 24]*

The Holy Qur'ân instructs us to treat our children with affection and kindness and to conduct ourselves with forgiveness and compassion. Punishing them on their misdemeanours, taking revenge upon them or to vent one's anger upon them is detestable indeed. Allâh ﷻ pardons the shortcomings and showers His mercy upon those who conduct themselves with forgiveness and leniency towards their house folk.

Allâh Ta'âlâ declares in the Holy Qur'ân:

وَإِن تَعْفُوا وَتَصْفَحُوا وَتَغْفِرُوا فَإِنَّ اللهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

"And if you forgive and overlook and pardon, then Allâh ﷻ is most-forgiving, most merciful." *[Sûrah Taghâbun Verse 14]*

What transpired was that some people were deprived of the fortune of Hijrah. When they decided to migrate to Madînah, their families intervened and said that they tolerated them entering the fold of Islâm but in no way will they put up with them abandoning their family members and kinsfolk. Their wives and children incited their sentiments of love to such an extent that these people ultimately capitulated and refrained from migrating to Madînah. Later on, when these people finally migrated, they discovered that those who preceded them and migrated towards Rasûlullâh ﷺ were much more enlightened in matters of Dîn than them. This really offended them. They felt that their wives and children are responsible for their deprivation. This incited them into a rage of fury and prompted them to take revenge from their family members.

At this juncture, the Holy Qur'ân advised them that no doubt you were deprived of the virtues of Hijrah due to the foolishness of the family members but you are guilty for giving preference to them over the dictates of Dîn. In future, take heed of them but remember that Allâh ﷻ disapproves of you being harsh with them or punishing them. Conducting yourself in a favourable manner is also a dictate of Dîn. Allâh ﷻ Himself is All-forgiving. Hence, He admires those who forgive. If you are hopeful of Allâh's ﷻ pardon and mercy, conduct yourself affectionately and warmly with your children. Excuse them, overlook their misdemeanours and forgive them.

From the aforementioned verse, the 'Ulamâ have inferred that even if the family members are guilty of contravening

the laws of Sharî'ah, it is not appropriate to become disgusted with them or to be hostile towards them or to curse them in any way. Instead, he should strive to discipline them with affection and tenderness.

The Advice of Ahnaf Bin Qays

Ahnaf bin Qays was a renowned Arab leader. He was famous amongst the Arabs for his magnificence and grandeur, for his wisdom and tolerance and for his status and majesty. Hadrat Mu'âwiyah ﷺ held him in high esteem. Hadrat Mu'âwiyah ﷺ used to say: "If Ahnaf is ruined, consider all the Arabs ruined."

Once Hadrat Mu'âwiyah ﷺ summoned him. When he arrived, he asked him: "O Abû Bahr! What is your opinion as far as conduct with children is concerned?" He replied: "Children are the fruit of our earnest aspirations and they are the props of our backbones. We are to them like a soft and safe plot of land. We are to them like the sky that shelters them. It is due to them that we get the courage to accomplish great feats. Therefore, if the children want something, provide it delightfully and happily. Eradicate the cause of his distress and he will love you and admire your paternal endeavours. Do not become such a burden unto him that he looks forward to your death or he develops hatred for you." Examine these words of Ahnaf bin Qays again and again and implore Allâh Ta'âlâ to entrench these words into your heart and mind.

Equality amongst Children

Hadrat Nu'mân bin Bashîr ﷺ relates: "My father once made over a gift to me. Upon this, my mother 'Amrah bint Rawâhah *radiallâhû 'anhâ* told my father, Bashîr ﷺ, that she will not be satisfied until Rasûlullâh ﷺ is not appointed a witness to this endowment." Nonetheless, Hadrat Bashîr ﷺ went to Rasûlullâh ﷺ and submitted: "O Nabî of Allâh ﷺ! I

have offered something to my son Nu'mân, the son of 'Amrah bint Rawâhah *radiallâhû 'anhâ*. However, she is adamant that I appoint you a witness over this endowment." Rasûlullâh ﷺ asked him: "Just as you offered a slave to Nu'mân, did you offer a slave to your other sons as well." When he replied in the negative, Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "Fear Allâh ﷻ! Maintain equality amongst all your children." Hadrat Nu'mân ﷺ says: "My father returned home and repossessed the item."

According to another narration, Rasûlullâh ﷺ remarked: "I will not become a witness to cruelty and injustice." *[Mishkât Bâbul-'Atâyâ vol.1 p.261]*

According to yet another narration, Rasûlullâh ﷺ asked Bashîr ﷺ: "Do you want every one of your children to conduct themselves favourably with you?" He replied: "Surely, why not?" Rasûlullâh ﷺ counselled him: "Then don't do this."

It is not possible for a person to cherish equal love for all his children. At times, he may be naturally inclined to one of them more then the other. Impartiality as far as love is concerned is neither possible nor required from a person.

The Hadîth imposes equality and impartiality amongst all children. As far as them being your very own children, they are all equal and they all enjoy the same rights over you. Therefore, your conduct should also be the same with all of them. Do not give preference to one over the other. Preferential treatment towards one child is not only an infringement of the other's rights but it has a negatively impact on them as well. The child who enjoys preferential treatment tends to develop tendencies of pride and arrogance and he is given to look down at his other siblings with eyes of contempt.

On the other hand, those who are discriminated against tend to develop an inferiority complex and psychologically

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On the other hand, those who are discriminated against tend to develop an inferiority complex and psychologically

they adopt a stigma of insignificance and disdain. This subsequently affects their moral and physical well-being. Apart from this, the sentiments of love, affection, selflessness and sacrifice that siblings naturally cherish for one another are also marred. Similarly, the sentiments of honour and respect, admiration and esteem they value for his parents are also affected.

If a person has children from two wives and his heart is not so inclined to one of the wife's children or due to their detestable habits he is disinclined to them, then the father is obviously excused. However, Islâm does charge him to maintain equality amongst all his children. If the father provides all forms of luxuries for one child and makes the other child suffer, he is deemed a criminal in the eyes of the Sharî'ah.

The parents may delude themselves and justify their biased conduct on some grounds or the other, they may be able to hoodwink the world but in the eyes of Allâh ﷻ, they are neither able to conceal their transgression nor are they able to deceive Him. Rasûlullâh ﷺ has declared such discriminatory conduct as a form of cruelty and injustice.

The ethics of impartiality also decrees that you do not go on praising one child whilst leaving out the other. Sometimes, the parents unwittingly go on extolling the talents of one of the children. This subsequently means that the other children are either stupid or relatively slower whilst this child is, Mâshâ Allâh, very bright. Another problem with this attitude is that the other children feel that only this child is admirable to the parents and family whilst they are dim-witted and inept. They feel that whatever they do, they are inevitably going to be labelled with names like useless and stupid etc. People find fault with everything they do. So why bother to do anything for that matter? So the parents should refrain from interminably praising one child. One of the methods of sustaining and preserving this talent of the child

is to refrain from discussing it so frequently otherwise he may be overcome with an evil eye or perhaps this may give rise to an assembly of jealous people.

Similarly, do not favour your sister's or brother's children over your own children either by words or by action. If you detect any talents in your nephews or nieces not found in your own children, make Du'â to Allâh Ta'âlâ to bestow the same upon your own children too. Notwithstanding this, do not lament to your children: "Look at Na'îm. He is of your age. He is your cousin. He is so intelligent but you ...? He is so sharp and diligent. Look at his manners. He talks as though he is emitting a fragrance of flowers from his mouth but look at yourself! You are a blockheaded idiot".
Don't ever make such critical and malicious remarks. Never!

Affection towards Children

Affection means tenderness, warmth and love. Respect for the seniors and affection towards the juniors is after all a basic moral of mankind. This is emphasised by the teachings of Islâm and the Ahâdîth of Rasûlullâh ﷺ. However, affection towards the youngsters has been particularly singled out. These children are a great *Ni'mah* (boon) of Allâh ﷻ. Allâh ﷻ entrusts them to your care and their proper upbringing is your responsibility. You are obliged to cast their character within the mould of Islâm. This obligation can only be fulfilled if you make affection the elementary constituent of your upbringing. Affection in no way means that you should pamper them inappropriately or indulge them to such an extent that they become defiant and disobedient.

Compassion does not mean that you give them a free reign in whatever they wish to do without any form of scrutiny on your part. In order to protect them from evil habits, you should be a bit stern with them also whenever the need arises. However, this sternness should also be affectionate and for the betterment of the child. For example, once the

child turns seven, command him to perform Salâh and instruct him to accompany you to the Musjid. If he fails to do so or you detect any form of negligence towards his Salâh, reprimand him. In this way, by the time he is ten, the habit of performing Salâh will be staunchly developed.

However, if he persists with his disregard for Salâh, be stern with him and staying within the confines of Sharî'ah, you may even punish him. Similarly, if you notice that he is wont of telling lies, counsel him with affection and if he is adamant, you may be a bit harsh with him. In short, do not overlook any of their vices or else they would develop into evil habits. Strive to eliminate their repulsive tendencies and where required, employ austere measures against the child. Now when the child goes beyond the age of ten, keep a strict vigil at all times but in such a way that he is unaware of your constant surveillance. If you have a maid at home, dissuade him from freely associating with her and other girls of his age. Also, do not allow him to be alone with them.

Notwithstanding this, for Allâh's sake, do not be so harsh with your children that they consider you an embodiment of terror and apprehension. The correct way of dealing with this is to analyse the child's misdemeanours and explore the fundamental causes of his errant behaviour. Then you should examine the solution to the problem. As far as possible, guide him with tenderness and affection. The most effective way of accomplishing this is to teach them whilst joining them in their fun, games and laughter. Occasionally, narrate to them the incidents of the Sahâbah ﵃ and the Tâbi'in *rahmatullâhi 'alaihim*. This has a very profound effect on their hearts.

When you advise the child with warmth and affection, "Son! Always speak the truth, abstain from lies, respect your elders, steer clear of greed and jealousy, do not fight with your friends, do not leave today's work for tomorrow, shun

all forms of obstinacy", it is bound to have a more effective outcome.

Similarly, counselling them in the light of the stories of the Sahâbah ﵃ and in the light of fascinating incidents is more effective. This is because children are generally captivated with stories and fascinating incidents. All this is only possible if you are affectionate towards your children and you counsel them in a tone of warmth. Alhamdulillâh! We are all Muslims and the adherents of the Sunnah of Rasûlullâh ﷺ. We have firm conviction that every form of goodness is entrenched within his lifestyle.

Rasûlullâh ﷺ was very compassionate and loving towards children. Whilst returning from a journey, if he came across a child on the outskirts of Madînah, he would pick the child up and seat him in front or behind him. Similarly, if he came across children playing, he would smile at them and greet them with Salâm. In fact, he wouldn't even give them a chance to observe the Salâm first. Thereafter he used to talk to them in a very loving and affectionate manner.
[Siratun Nabî ﷺ vol.2]

May Allâh ﷻ also bestow us with these noble attributes. Âmîn.

The aforementioned words of advice will only benefit you if you yourself practically abstain from the vices you want your children to forsake. For instance, if you want him to abstain from backbiting but you talk ill about your office friends or other family members, he will not abstain from backbiting regardless of the number of evils you portray about this sin. Someone knocks at your door and you send your son to say that dad is not around or dad is sleeping. Remember that you are practically asking him to speak lies. This practical exercise in falsehood will make him nothing but a liar. On the contrary, your advice on the merits of truthfulness will be nothing but an exercise in futility.

Therefore, whatever you do practically, the child will follow suit.

Rear Your Children by Means of the Qur'ân and Hadîth

The Holy Qur'ân is actually a constitution governing our every-day lives. It is the formula for success in both the worlds for all of humankind right up to the day of judgement. This is a manual that would purge the world of all their woes and misery. Rasûlullâh ﷺ was the practical example of this guidebook. His statements made up the commentary of this Holy book. The practical implementation of these statements made the Arabs the leading scholars and philosophers of the entire world.

Therefore, you should also strive to rear your children according to the dictates of the Holy Qur'ân and the Ahâdîth of Rasûlullâh ﷺ. Entrench the teachings of the Holy Qur'ân and the Ahâdîth of Rasûlullâh ﷺ into their minds. Narrate to them the stories mentioned therein. Make them memorise the sections dealing with good counsel and guidance. One of the methods of achieving this is to allocate a fixed time daily - after Fajr or Maghrib for instance - and sit with all the children and explain the translation or Tafsîr of a verse or read from a commentary of the Holy Qur'ân like *Ma'âriful Qur'ân* or any other reliable Tafsîr.

For example, you may recite the verse: "So a person should observe his food" *[Sûrah 'Abas verse 24]* and commentate on the verse. Explain how Allâh ﷻ provides sustenance to us. First there was absolutely nothing. Allâh ﷻ then provided the seed as well as the intellect to farm the seed. Who knows in which part of the world the seed was planted and who planted it. From the seed sprouted a shoot that was protected by Allâh ﷻ. This shoot grew into a sapling, which eventually developed into a tree. The tree then bore fruit and after going through a number of hands, it finally reached us. Here we are seated in our homes and eating a

variety of delicious fruit and food without much of an effort on our part.

Ponder over it son! What sweetness has been provided in a banana. What a pleasing colour it has. Look at its skin that acts as a protective covering for it. Take an orange. Look at its colour, taste and fragrance. It is absolutely different to a banana but Allâh Ta'âlâ produces both from the same earth. The water that irrigates an orange tree also irrigates a banana tree but their taste, smell and colour are completely different. Just ponder over the supremacy of Allâh ﷻ. Therefore, son, we should appreciate these *Ni'mats* (blessings) of Allâh ﷻ. Whilst partaking of these blessings, form an intention that you would propagate the unity and power of Allâh ﷻ throughout the lands.

Food is the very basis of human life. The reality of this has been expounded in the form of a question; ponder over the seed that you consign to the ground. What percentage of your effort is involved in germinating the seed into a big tree? Once you think about it, you will realise that all the farmer had done was ploughed the land, added on a bit of fertiliser and softened the ground to enable the weak shoot to sprout up to the surface. The seed planter's labour merely revolves around this undertaking. Extracting the tree from the ground is neither within his capacity nor can he claim to have manufactured the tree. So then we return to the same question; who germinated the seed from beneath tons of earth and developed it into a tree of such beauty and benefit? There is only one answer; it was created through the absolute power and amazing ingenuity of Allâh ﷻ, the Creator.

At times you may commentate on the connotation of the Du'â after drinking water. Explain to them the meaning of the Du'â. Describe how Allâh ﷻ provides pure, sweet and clear water for us from the sky through mountains and from the earth. If the water is a wee bit brackish, we won't be

able to put it to our lips or quench our thirst with it. Allâh ﷻ has made the water sweet and quenching. If Allâh ﷻ withholds the water or makes it brackish, life would become extremely difficult. This is why Allâh ﷻ recounts His favours upon us in the following words:

"Why don't you look at the water you drink? Did you bring it down from the clouds or did We bring it down? If We wish, we can render it brackish. So why don't you show appreciation?" *[Surah Wâqi'ah verse 68]*

In order to prevent them from sinning, you may recite and explain the following verse of Sûrah Yâsîn to the children: "Today we will seal their mouths and their hands will converse with us. And their legs will testify what they used to do." *[Sûrah Yâsîn verse 65]*

Explain to them that these very limbs for whose comfort we perpetrate a variety of sins will testify against us on the day of judgement. Similarly, explain to them the divine commandments mentioned in Sûrah Hujurât or make them memorise the regulations governing Hijâb etc. mentioned in Sûrah Nûr or in any other Sûrah.

In short, continue teaching them and go on making them memorise something or the other. Also make them recap and summarise what you have taught them. You may even make them compete with one another. At the same token, develop an enthusiasm for putting these divine rulings into practise. Similarly, read to them the Ahâdîth of books like *Ma'ariful-Hadîth*, *Riyâdus Sâlihîn* and *Fadâil A'mâl*. When the girls grow up a bit, get their mothers to recite *Bahishtî Zewar*[1] to them. Recite the text of the *kitâb* to them and thereafter question them about it.

Inshâ Allâh, in this manner, from a very tender age, the divine laws of Allâh ﷻ and the teachings and lifestyle of

[1] Available in English from Madrasah Arabia Islamia, Azaadville, South Africa.

Rasûlullâh ﷺ will be ingrained into their hearts and the same children will Inshâ Allâh, become the *Dâ'îs* and the future flag bearers of Islâm. Renouncing a single divine commandment will be more difficult to them than forsaking the whole world. Such children will rightfully be the pride of this Ummah. The same children will be the *Jaylânîs*, the *Baghdâdîs*, the *Zubaydah*s and *Râbi'ahs* of the future. Inshâ Allâh.

The Child's First Lesson

Rasûlullâh ﷺ is reported to have said: "When your children learn to speak, teach them the Kalimah 'Lâ Ilâhâ Illallâh' first." *[Kanzul 'Ummâl vol.16 p.441]*

On the basis of this Hadîth we learn that the Kalimah of Tauhîd should be primarily taught to the children. Similarly, from the outset, it should be made clearly manifest to the child that the being eligible for 'Ibâdat, worthy of praise and gratitude is the one and only Allâh ﷻ Who brought him into this world and He thereafter saturated the hearts of his parents with affection and love for him and He also blessed him with innumerable bounties.

The aforesaid issue of *Tauhîd* (monotheism) is the cornerstone of Dîn. If this is firm from the very beginning, it will Inshâ Allâh remain firm right up to the very end. No matter what the conditions are like, it wouldn't worry him in the least because his Îmân upon Allâh ﷻ is resolutely entrenched within his heart. He has firm conviction that benefit and loss lies solely in the control of Allâh ﷻ. Without the will and pleasure of Allâh ﷻ, the whole world won't be able to harm a single strand of his hair and they won't be able to deprive him of the good Allâh ﷻ has decreed for him. If Allâh ﷻ has declared any form of detriment against him, the whole world won't be able to save him from it. This was

the very advice offered by Rasûlullâh ﷺ to Hadrat 'Abdullâh bin 'Abbâs ؓ as a young boy.

When the child embraces the fact that the Being of Allâh ﷻ is the real doer or initiator of every single action in this world, none of the calamities of the world will bother him in the least. This is so because he is convinced that everything is from Allâh ﷻ and whatever pleases Allâh ﷻ is also pleasing to him.

This is one of the chief reasons why the Holy Qur'ân focuses so vigorously on the concept of Tauhîd. Our pious predecessors who reared their children upon the correct teachings also focused upon this concept first and instructed their children accordingly. The Holy Qur'ân cites the incident of Hadrat Luqmân ؑ wherein he advises his son. The concept of Tauhîd featured most prominently in his list of advices.

The foremost advice he offered to his son was, as the Holy Qur'ân portrays it:
"O Son! Do not ascribe partners unto Allâh. Verily *Shirk* (polytheism) is indeed a great injustice." *[Sûrah Luqmân verse 13]*

Reflect over this; Luqmân's ؑ primary concern was the rectification of faith and the first and foremost article of faith is that one believes Allâh ﷻ to be the sole creator and controller of the entire universe. He should not ascribe any partners to Allâh ﷻ. There can be no greater form of injustice than equating the creation with the Creator.

Hadrat Luqmân ؑ offered a number of other advises to his son but the primary objective here is the belief in the unity of Allâh ﷻ. This can be accomplished by initiating the child with the concept of Tauhîd and by teaching it to him as his first lesson. Thereafter you may tutor him gradually about the other fundamental articles of faith. You may also make him memorise these elementary articles of faith. For

instance, Allâh ﷻ is all Alone and He has no partner. He is the only being worthy of worship. He has created the earth and the sky. He is the Creator, the Controller, He honours or He humiliates, He is the provider and the withholder or inhibitor. Muhammad ﷺ is the final messenger of Allâh ﷻ. The Holy Qur'ân is the book of Allâh ﷻ. Etc. etc.

At the very outset, if the child is reared in this manner, his Dînî upbringing will become much more easier as he grows up, Inshâ Allâh.

Îmân and *Yaqîn* (faith and conviction) are such great bounties that Rasûlullâh ﷺ taught us to implore Allâh ﷻ to improve and perfect our Îmân. Some of the Du'âs Rasûlullâh ﷺ taught us are mentioned hereunder. Every Muslim father is requested to recite these Du'âs and make the children memorise them as well.

The Du'âs mentioned in the Ahâdîth are:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّىْ اَسْئَلُكَ اِيْمَانًا يُبَاشِرُ قَلْبِيْ وَيَقِيْنًا صَادِقًا حَتّٰى اَعْلَمُ اَنَّهُ لَا يُصِيْبُنِيْ
اِلاَّ مَا كَتَبْتَ لِيْ وَرِضًا بِمَا قَسَمْتَ لِيْ اِنَّكَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ.

"O Allâh! I beg of You to grant me faith that is firmly entrenched in my heart and such true conviction that would enable me to realise that nothing will come my way except that which You had decreed for me and I ask of You to make me content with whatever life You have allotted for me. Verily You have absolute control over everything." *[Kanzul 'Ummâl vol.1 p.194]*

اَللّٰهُمَّ اَعْطِنِىْ اِيْمَانًا لَا يَرْتَدُّ وَيَقِيْنًا لَيْسَ بَعْدَهُ كُفْرٌ وَرَحْمَةً اَنَالُ بِهَا شَرَفَ
كَرَامَتِكَ فِىْ الدُّنْيَا وَالْاٰخِرَةِ

"O Allâh! Grant me faith that would not waver and such conviction that is not followed by disbelief and shower me with such mercy through which I can acquire the nobility of Your honour in this world and the hereafter." *[Targhib vol.4 p.583]*

اَللّٰهُمَّ إِنِّىْ اَسْئَلُكَ اِيْمَانًا لاَ يَرْتَدُّ وَنَعِيْمًا لاَ يَنْفَدُ وَمُرَافَقَةَ نَبِيِّنَا مُحَمَّدٍ ﷺ فِىْ
اَعْلَى دَرَجَةِ الْجَنَّةِ جَنَّةِ الْخُلْدِ

"O Allah! I beg of You unfaltering Îman and I ask such favours that would not cease and I beg of you to grant me the companionship of Our Nabî Muhammad ﷺ in the most lofty stages of paradise, the paradise of eternity." *[Al-Hizb-ul-A'zam p.75 from Nasai, Ibn Hibban, Hakim narrated by Ibn Mas'ud ؓ]*

اَللّٰهُمَّ زَيِّنَّا بِزِيْنَةِ الْاِيْمَانِ وَاجْعَلْنَا هُدَاةً مُهْتَدِيْنَ

"O Allah! Adorn us with the beauty of Îman and make us guides and well-guided." *[Al-Hizb. p.44, Nasai, Kitabus Sahw Hadith no.1289]*

اَللّٰهُمَّ إِنِّىْ اَسْئَلُكَ صِحَّةً فِىْ اِيْمَانٍ وَاِيْمَانًا فِىْ حُسْنِ خُلُقٍ وَنَجَاحًا يَتْبَعُهَا فَلاَحٌ
وَّ رَحْمَةً مِنْكَ وَ عَافِيَةً وَّ مَغْفِرَةً مِّنْكَ وَ رِضْوَانًا

"O Allah! Grant me perfection of Îman (faith) and bestow me with faith coupled with good character. I beg of You salvation in this world followed by success in the hereafter. From You Alone, I beseech mercy, security, safety, forgiveness and Your pleasure." *[Musnad Ahmad Hadith no.7923]*

اَللّٰهُمَّ حَبِّبْ اِلَيْنَا الْاِيْمَانَ وَ زَيِّنْهُ فِىْ قُلُوْبِنَا وَ كَرِّهْ اِلَيْنَا الْكُفْرَ وَالْفُسُوْقَ وَ
الْعِصْيَانَ وَاجْعَلْنَا مِنَ الرَّاشِدِيْنَ

"O Allâh! Inculcate the love of Îmân into our hearts and embellish our hearts with it and create a loathing within us for disbelief, transgression and sin. And make us of the rightly-guided." *[Al-Hizb. p.61, Musnad Ahmad Hadith no.14945]*

Commentary: It is imperative upon each one of us to ponder over the great bounty of Îmân. Rasûlullâh ﷺ has instructed us to make Du'â for this bounty on various occasions and in an assortment of words. Ponder over the varied words of his Du'âs; Rasûlullâh ﷺ is pleading to Allâh ﷻ to cast the love of Îmân into his heart or to improve his Îmân. In some Du'âs, he begs Allâh ﷻ for ceaseless faith or such faith that is entrenched into the heart. He also pleaded with Allâh ﷻ to grant him faith that enables him to cheerfully accept whatever has been pre-ordained for him. He also asked Allâh ﷻ for Îmân coupled with good character and he also begged Allâh ﷻ to embellish and adorn his Îmân.

Therefore, every Muslim male and female is requested to beseech Allâh ﷻ for perfect and everlasting Îmân and true conviction. He should also develop within himself and within others this initiative of Îmân and he should strive to transmit this commitment to all the peoples of the world. For this he should also engage in constant Du'â. Similarly, he should discuss the grandeur of Allâh ﷻ with whomever he runs into during the day. He should express the magnificence of Allâh ﷻ by expounding the fact that whatever happens in this world happens solely at His absolute behest. Everything lies in His complete control. He controls boundless treasures of the scarce materialistic things we see around us. The women of the household should teach this to the women who come to visit them and also to the children and the maids working at home. Learn the translation of the verses of the Holy Qur'ân dealing with Îmân and the grandeur of Allâh ﷻ and teach them to your

children, students and followers. Teach them these Du'âs and encourage them to recite them after every Salâh.

May Allâh Ta'âla grant us all perfect faith and true Îmân. May He also make us loyal disseminators of this struggle of Îmân and enable us to take this struggle to every corner of the globe and may He make us breathe our last with Îmân. Âmin.

Techniques of Perfecting Îmân

1. Calling others towards the greatness of Allâh ﷻ.
2. Maintaining favourable family ties; Hadrat Abû Hurayrah ؓ narrates that Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "A person would not cherish sincere faith until he maintains favourable family relationship with those members who sever relationship with him, and until he forgives those who wronged him and until he pardons those who verbally abuse him and he is polite to those who are impolite to him."

Rasûlullâh ﷺ is reported to have said: "A *Wâsil* (one who maintains favourable family ties) is not he who reciprocates but a true *Wâsil* is he who sustains favourable family relationship with others in spite of them severing family ties with him." *[Riyâdus Sâlihîn p.124]*

Therefore, a Muslim who aspires for perfect Îmân should socialise with his relatives. He should overlook their faults and flaws. He should continue making Du'âs for them and as far as possible he should be benevolent towards them especially towards his brothers and sisters. In the case of a woman, she must maintain favourable ties with her mother-in-law, sisters-in-law and co-wife. She should encourage her husband, father and other Mahram relatives to maintain good family ties as well. Bear in mind that breaking family ties is such a wicked deed that even on the night of Qadr, a guilty person's Du'âs are not accepted. With the objective of

pleasing Him, Allâh ﷻ will bless a person who maintains favourable family ties with the bounty of sincere faith.

3. The sweetness of Îmân, the method of acquiring which has been spelled out in the Hadîth is as follows: a person whose gaze falls inadvertently on something forbidden and he instantaneously draws his gaze away from it will be blessed with the sweetness of Îmân. Hadrat 'Abdullâh bin Mas'ûd ؓ narrates that Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "Allâh ﷻ has declared: "The casting of an evil glance is a lethal arrow from amongst the arrows of Iblîs. He who renounces this out of fear for Me, I will compensate him with the sweetness of Îmân which he will perceive within his heart." *[Kanzul 'Ummâl vol.5 p.328]*

Intention of Sunnah whilst Kissing Children

Ummul Muminîn Hadrat 'Âishah *radiallâhû 'anhâ* says: "I have not witnessed anyone who had such strong resemblance to Rasûlullâh ﷺ either in his habits, character, behaviour or speech than his daughter, Hadrat Fâtimah *radiallâhû 'anhâ*. Whenever she came to Rasûlullâh ﷺ, he would stand up for her, direct all his attention towards her, grasp her hand within his own hand, kiss her and then he used to seat her on his own place. Similarly, when Rasûlullâh ﷺ went to visit her, she would stand up for him, direct all her attention towards him, grasp his hand within her own, kiss him and seat him on her own place." *[Abû Dâwûd Kitâbul Adab vol.2 p.352]*

In another Hadîth, Hadrat Barâ bin 'Âzib ؓ relates: "Once, immediately following his return to Madînah after one of the battles, I accompanied Hadrat Abû Bakr ؓ to his home. I saw his daughter Hadrat 'Âishah *radiallâhû 'anhâ* lying down stricken with a very high fever. Hadrat Abû Bakr ؓ approached her and enquired about her health etc. He then (either out of love and affection or in consideration of the Sunnah) kissed her on the cheek." *[Abû Dâwûd Kitâbul Adab vol.2 p. 353]*

From these two Ahâdith, you can gauge for yourself what degree of affection Rasûlullâh ﷺ and Hadrat Abû Bakr ؓ displayed for their children by kissing them in such a warm manner. Every affectionate father loves his children and prompted by the spirit of this paternal love he also kisses them occasionally. However, every Muslim father should bear in mind that every one of his actions, even if it were something natural or habitual, if he ascertains the Sunnah of Rasûlullâh ﷺ and then carries it out accordingly, he would be assured of three advantages:

(1) The first and foremost advantage is that he would be fulfilling a Sunnah of Rasûlullâh ﷺ. This in turn would enhance the love for Rasûlullâh ﷺ. The more your love for Rasûlullâh ﷺ, the greater your chances of success in this world and the hereafter. And how fortunate is that Muslim who executes all his actions in accordance with the Sunnah of Rasûlullâh ﷺ. One of the reasons the Ambiyâ ؑ (messengers) were sent to this world as human beings is that they also marry and have children and live as fathers. How fortunate would we be if we abide by their example and fulfil the rights of fatherhood!? Our adherence to their lifestyle is sure to wash off onto our children as well.

(2) The second benefit we are assured of is that we will be rewarded for our actions. Allâh ﷻ is the most merciful, the noblest and the most compassionate of all His creation. He is very appreciative of good deeds. He is affectionate, just and His knowledge is all encompassing. Is there any other being who generates the greatest of things from absolutely nothing? On the most insignificant pretexts, His gates of recompense are flung open. So why should we not love Him and glorify Him? Why don't we always take His name and call upon Him in distress? Why don't we implore His assistance and strive to please Him at all times? Why don't we comply with His wishes and love Him more than our own selves or more than

our parents and children? Why don't we implement each and every one of the blessed Sunnahs of Rasûlullâh ﷺ, and why don't we encourage the whole world to comply with his teachings thereby making ourselves deserving of Allâh's ﷻ choicest rewards?

(3) The third benefit is that when you shower the child with affection or kiss him simply because it is the Sunnah of Rasûlullâh ﷺ, you were upset with the child because he flouted the laws of Allâh ﷻ, you were happy with him simply to please Allâh ﷻ, you complied with his legitimate wishes or you educated him simply to please Allâh ﷻ, then this child will turn out to become a "coolness of your eyes" in this world as well as the next.

Rasûlullâh's ﷺ Affection towards Children

The Sahâbah ؓ were faithful in preserving every single statement and action of Rasûlullâh ﷺ. So much so that even matters affecting his domestic and private life has been preserved and practised upon by the Sahâbah ؓ as a component of Dîn. Subsequently, a number of such Ahâdîth have come to be preserved in the books of Hadîth. We should study and deliberate over these Ahâdîth. Constant study of the Ahâdîth makes it very plain to us that Rasûlullâh ﷺ never raised his hand on any of his children. He did not beat nor rebuke any of them. He did not berate them nor was he harsh with them. There is not a single such incident recorded in the books of Hadîth. Children are children after all.

Hadrat Anas ؓ served Rasûlullâh ﷺ for a period of ten years. Day and night he was in Rasûlullâh's ﷺ blessed presence. We all know that the greater the degree of affiliation the greater the display of anger or joy. However, during this long period of ten years, Rasûlullâh ﷺ never reproached him saying: "Oh well! What did you do?"

Hadrat Anas ﷺ himself says: "For a period of ten years in Madînah, I was in the service of Rasûlullâh ﷺ. At that time I was a young boy so my endeavours were not always in conformity to Rasûlullâh's ﷺ bidding (nor can it be because everything a ten twelve year old boy does is not always satisfactory). However, in this long period of ten years, Rasûlullâh ﷺ never uttered *uff* to me and never did he ever grumble to me, "why did you do this?" or "why didn't you do this?" *[Sharh Shamâil Tirmidhi p.206]*

Similarly, Hadrat 'Aishah *radiallâhû 'anhâ* relates the exceptional conduct of Rasûlullâh ﷺ in the following words: "Rasûlullâh ﷺ never raised his hand upon a slave or woman or even an animal. Whenever he entered the house, he entered smiling and in a cheerful mood." *[Siratun Nabî ﷺ vol.2 p.176]*

Rasûlullâh ﷺ's male issues all passed away in infancy but he had female children who reached adulthood and they also had children. Within this entire period, not once did he become angry or annoyed with them. He had so much of love for them that he would often say: "Fâtimah is a fragment of my body. Whosoever displeases her displeases me." *[Mishkât vol.2 p.568]*

After her marriage, whenever Hadrat Fâtimah *radiallâhû 'anhâ* came to visit Rasûlullâh ﷺ, he would stand and welcome her. He would then kiss her forehead and seat her on his place. This was his custom with all his children.
Rasûlullâh's ﷺ eldest daughter, Hadrat Zainab *radiallâhû 'anhâ*, was married to her cousin Abul 'Âs. At the time of the marriage, Hadrat Khadîjah *radiallâhû 'anhâ* gave her an expensive Yemeni necklace as a wedding present. When Rasûlullâh ﷺ migrated to Madînah Munawwarah, she remained behind as her husband had as yet not embraced Islâm. During the battle of Badr, he was on the side of the polytheists and was captured as a prisoner of war. The Muslims decided to collect ransom from the prisoners and set them free. The relatives dispatched the ransom and they

were subsequently released. Part of the ransom that Hadrat Zainab *radiallâhû 'anhâ* sent to free Abul-'Âs was made up of the necklace she had received from her mother Hadrat Khadîjah *radiallâhû 'anhâ*. When Rasûlullâh ﷺ's glance fell on this necklace, he was moved to tears. The Sahâbah became very distraught at this sight. Upon enquiry, Rasûlullâh ﷺ asked: "If you don't mind, I wish to return this necklace to Zainab and liberate her husband as well." The Sahâbah gladly accepted this request. Rasûlullâh ﷺ despatched the necklace with Abul-'Âs back to Makkah on the condition that he will send Zainab to Madînah on his return home. He returned to Makkah and carried out the request of Rasûlullâh ﷺ. After some time, Abul-'Âs also embraced Islâm and migrated to Madînah Munawwarah. Hadrat Zainab *radiallâhû 'anhâ* passed away in the 8th year of Hijrah. Rasûlullâh ﷺ went into the grave himself and he was struck with disconcerting grief as he was lowering her into the grave. He pleaded with Allâh ﷻ: "O Allâh! She was very weak. O Allâh! Render all her difficulties easy for her and make her grave spacious for her." *[Tabaqât Ibn S'ad]*

Not only did he love his own children but Rasûlullâh ﷺ was exceptionally fond of his grandchildren as well. Whenever he went to Hadrat Fâtimah's *radiallâhû 'anhâ* house, he would say: "Bring my children to me." She would bring her sons Hasan and Husain ﷺ to Rasûlullâh ﷺ and he would hug them and breathe in their scent. *[Mishkât vol.2 p.571]*

Quite often, whilst performing Salâh, Rasûlullâh ﷺ would open his arm out to allow Hadrat Hasan ﷺ or other children to climb onto it easily. Sometimes he would lengthen his Sajdah to allow the children to climb onto his back. Once Rasûlullâh ﷺ seated both of them onto his back and crawled about with them. When Hadrat 'Umar ﷺ witnessed this scene, he remarked: "Wow! What a majestic mount." Rasûlullâh ﷺ replied: "And how majestic is the rider." *[Mishkât vol.2 p.571]*

We are the adherents of this very Nabî ﷺ. It is our responsibility to treasure each and every one of his Sunnats and hold them dearer than our own lives. Implement this Sunnah as well into your life. Maintain a relationship of love, affection and tenderness with your children. In this manner, you will be implementing the Sunnah, you will be highly rewarded and your love and worth will swell in the hearts of the children. You will be able to lead a more comfortable life and the children will also be at ease.

Sibling Rivalry and Your Responsibility

Sibling rivalry is prevalent in virtually every household, every street and in every country and culture. However, if one of the squabbling children is unduly showered with more support or patronised more than his siblings, it would ruin the calm and atmosphere of the home and this would also develop feelings of disgust and revulsion in the hearts of the other children. Taking into account these ills, you would have to be very careful when dealing with sibling rivalry and you will be required to analyse the situation realistically. So first and foremost, try and determine why and how the problem erupted. If the cause can be eliminated and the children advised, the issue of contention will be solved, Inshâ Allâh.

Quite often what happens is that one child mocks or offends the other child and this leads them to a scuffle. They may be playing with toys and one snatches the toy from the other's hand and they now start fighting with each other or they both howl and cry. Sometimes the one child has already eaten his sweets or snack and he grabs his sibling's sweets.

Similarly, when they are playing hockey or cricket etc., one team claims to have won whilst the other team refuses to acknowledge defeat. This also leads them to fight with one another. After evaluating these events, you will come to the

conclusion that there are three fundamental reasons for children fighting amongst themselves:

1. A natural inclination of mischievousness and the normal tendency of restlessness will ensure that children don't sit at ease.
2. Due to their naivety they tend to be nonchalant about the happiness and pleasure of their siblings when it comes to their own happiness and pleasure.
3. Due to their innocence and guiltlessness, they are unable to control their emotions and sentiments. They are swift in expressing their feelings of grief, anger, joy, greed and desire.

Such rivalry amongst them doesn't even carry a trace of malevolence or hatred. This is why they reconcile so quickly and start playing again as though nothing happened.

If your children are fighting amongst themselves and they are still young, provoke their sense of shame and refrain from unjustly patronising either of the two parties. For example, you may advise: "Son, how dreadful of you to fight with your brother. You don't want to give him the toy and you fancy fighting with him whereas he is so much younger than you are and he is playing with you. You should have been taking care of him instead of beating him. *Taubah, Taubah!* (Good gracious!)."

If the children are of an understanding age, appease them somehow and separate them. Thereafter summon each one individually and ascertain the reason behind their rivalry. Inform them of the immorality and vice attached to such squabbles. Also strive to eradicate the underlying cause of their squabble. Thereafter bring them both together and enlighten them about the virtues and benefits of living in peace and harmony. Advise them to put these words into practise. Also make Du'â for their perpetual unison and harmony. Similarly, if the child fights with one of his friends,

first make Du'â for him and then counsel him as mentioned above.

Whilst they are squabbling amongst themselves or with other children don't ever applaud or encourage them. Also refrain from mentioning the incident in a haughty manner. For instance, don't say things like: "My gallant boy really dealt with the other child nicely." Such statements will destroy the child. He will regard such hostilities as a grand achievement and he may subsequently develop a habit of squabbling with others. You should ingrain it into both their minds that fighting displeases Allâh ﷻ.

Apart from trying to bring the children into line, it is important to maintain an environment of happiness within the home. This is why you should ensure that you don't ever quarrel or argue with the wife in front of the children otherwise they will also regard fighting and quarrelling with one another as something inconsequential. When children are fighting, don't ever go into a rage and scream or rant about. Don't howl at or verbally abuse them. Do not just shoot up there and separate them and whack the daylights out of them. This can be likened to sprinkling petrol over a flame in an attempt to extinguish it. Do not participate in their rivalry by adding to the shouting and clamour. May Allâh ﷻ make us all ideal fathers. Âmîn.

Similarly, the moment you walked into the house in the evening, the wife complained that so and so beat your son up today or he shoved him into a mound of mud or he injured or assaulted him and you in a fit of rage go up to his house and hurl abuse at him. Later on you realise that both children were at fault. Perhaps your son ripped his clothing and scratched his face. If you are informed of such complaints, first explain to your house people that any form of hostility with anyone is deplorable. This creates disunity and fighting does not behove humans, as it is a barbaric thing to do. If the wife pulls her face and gets angry, don't

bother. If she ridicules you and chides you over your spinelessness or over your lack of vengeance, don't become angry with her. Be tolerant and affectionately explain to her the nastiness of taking rash decisions. Perhaps you could narrate the incidents of the Ambiyâ ﷷ who made Du'âs for those who verbally abused them or hurled stones at them.

Of course, you should thereafter look into the incident but very secretively without the house members realising it. If your child is guilty you should reprimand him and if the other party is guilty you should explain to them through their seniors. If possible you should make them embrace one another and develop the bonds of unity between them.

In this regard, we relate an incident reported by the daily newspaper 'Jang'. We hope you will read it attentively as it is a very thought-provoking story.

A Momentary Blunder

It was a scorching afternoon on May 23rd, 1996 when I was returning home from my job at Karachi's Steel Cadet College. As I left the bus stop to proceed towards my street, I was momentarily dazed to witness two orphan children, Hasan and Shâhid, playing bat and ball on a vacant plot of land. Their faces were flushed with the high temperature of midday. However, they were not concerned in the least about the heat or about who is passing by. They were not even bothered by the fact that the very same sport of bat and ball just last week turned them into orphans.
The area of Karachi that I was living in until last year August was a neighbourhood dominated by the lower to middle class. Amongst them were two neighbours who lived as bosom friends for the last twenty odd years. People in the neighbourhood would cite their affiliation as an epitome of friendship. One of them was Azhar Sâhib who was a superintendent in one of the government ministries. The other was Nâsir Sâhib who was a retired military sergeant

[illegible] was running a small grocery store in the neighbourhood. Nâsir Sâhib and Azhar Sâhib's wives and [illegible] enjoyed a very close and warm relationship.

Nâsir Sâhib had a number of children; five daughters and four sons. Azhar Sâhib had just two children; fourteen-year-old [illegible] and Shâhid who was seven. Nâsir Sâhib's younger son, Hasan Nâsir, was about the same age as Azhar Sâhib's son, Shâhid. Hasan and Shâhid were classmates attending the same school. Both of them would set out for school together and return home together. After school both of them would play and have fun together as well.

[illegible] of May 16, 1996, Hasan and [illegible] from school and after gobbling down [illegible] and ball and set out to [illegible] were left yelling at [illegible]? They just started playing [illegible] that it whooshed and struck [illegible] so powerfully that blood [illegible] as though a fountain was [illegible] by a rage of fury, [illegible] and hurled it at Hasan. The stone struck him on his chest and [illegible] with pain, he fell to the ground. [illegible] one another, they then started [illegible]. When Nâsir Sâhib, who was [illegible], he immediately set [illegible] each other's blood. He [illegible] dragged Hasan home whilst Shâhid [illegible] crying home.

When Azhar Sâhib's wife saw Shâhid returning home in blood-spattered clothing, she became hysterical and gave off a sudden shriek. When she asked him what transpired, instead of narrating the true story, he placed all the blame on Hasan's shoulders. Thus, Azhar Sâhib's wife, forgetting the love, affection and warmth that they enjoyed, started

verbally abusing and insulting Hasan and his mother. When Hasan's mother heard these insults, she was unable to stomach it and in spite of her husband appealing for calm and restraint, seething with rage, she went straight to Azhars Sâhib's house and pounding the door she challenged Shâhid's mother. Fuming with rage, she came out of the house and started fighting with Hasan's mother. By the time Nâsir Sâhib arrived on the scene, he sees that both women are already tearing each other's clothes and yanking each other's hair. He tried to intervene and as he was separating them, his hand accidentally brushed against Shâhids mother. This made matters even worse and rumours started spreading like wildfire. Now Shâhid's mother started vilifying and swearing Nâsir Sâhib as well. In the meantime, a few men and women of the area promptly separated them and temporarily kept any further hostility in abeyance.

Nonetheless, when Azhar Sâhib returned home exhausted after an arduous day at the office, his wife narrated the whole pathetic incident spiced with a bit of distortion and excess. As he heard this incident, his whole body shuddered with vehemence. His blood started simmering out of a sense of possessiveness. Without appraising the situation, he picked up an axe that was lying on the floor and went straight to Nâsir Sâhib's shop. There was just one customer in the shop at that time. Nâsir Sâhib was stooped down busy weighing some merchandise on his scale. Azhar Sâhib burst into the shop and without thinking struck Nâsir Sâhib a severe blow that critically wounded his left shoulder. In spite of his injury, he jumped up and hurled a one-kilo weight piece onto Azhar Sâhib's head. Unable to withstand the force of this weight piece, he passed out but within a moment he shuddered awake. He retrieved his fallen axe, rushed back into the shop and struck a blow onto Nâsir Sâhib's head. This swipe proved fatal and Nâsir Sâhib died at the scene. However, the blow Azhar Sâhib received on his head from the weight piece also proved lethal and he also fell down dead. With the racket created by the customer, by

[illegible] time a few people got to the scene, both bodies were [illegible] out. The police were informed and as usual they arrived quite late on the scene. The police removed their bodies and took them away for post mortem etc. The following afternoon after Zuhr Salāh, both men who became sworn enemies due to a trifling blunder, were laid to rest in North Karachi's cemetery.

[illegible] after this dreadful and tragic [illegible] when I saw [illegible] and Shāhid playing together. I [illegible] all parents not to make their children's [illegible] a matter of life and death. Children are prone to fight and [illegible] but they reconcile just as quickly. However, it is their parents' [illegible] that makes them sworn enemies [illegible] each other [illegible]

Listen to Both Sides of the Story

The father should ensure that he does not hasten to make a decision against any child merely by listening to one of the others. Once he receives a complaint from one of them, he should summon the other child and listen to what he has to say as well. Ascertain the reasons and then make a judgement. This will, Inshā Allāh, solve a number of problems.

Drawing conclusions on the basis of just one side of the story is a long way from impartiality and even-handedness. Sometimes, when the child returns home after school, he complains about his [illegible] or teacher. Quite often you hear [illegible] "This is what Madam said to me" or "I was [illegible] made me stand for a whole hour" etc. [illegible] the mother hears this, she becomes [illegible] and [illegible]. She influences her husband and he also becomes emotional about it. Now this foolish father, [illegible] by his wife or child, becomes angry or fights with the teacher without even bothering to probe any further.

Such conduct firstly draws the curse of the teacher and secondly it provides the child with a license to further his wayward behaviour. Sometimes, due to such a repulsive attitude of the parents, the child is deprived of any further academic progress. Therefore, do not be rash in drawing conclusions just by listening to one child complaining about the other or by listening to the younger child whinging about his older sibling or by listening to the child complain about his teacher or school. You should approach the teacher or principal of the school instead.

Serious Blunders of the Father

The father's conduct should be akin to that of an affectionate king who loves his subjects, toils for the success of his people and under whom the citizens feel safe and secure. At the same token, nobody has the nerve to defy him or to commit and offence. This is exactly how the father should conduct himself with his children. He should be loving and affectionate towards them whilst retaining a degree of dignity and awe. However, in order to instil awe in them or to amend their ways, don't ever do something that would have a negative impact on your marriage or on the upbringing of your children. Hereunder we cite a few examples of parental conduct that leave an awfully unpleasant impression on the child.

1. If one of the children is guilty of an offence, do not scold all the children or humiliate them. Admonish the guilty child privately away from the other children. This will prove more gainful if your intention is to mend his ways. Similarly, do not vent your annoyance of one issue over another unrelated issue. Hadrat Zaid bin Khālid ؓ narrates that a person posed a number of questions to Rasūlullāh ﷺ. When the person asked about stumbling upon a lost camel, Rasūlullāh ﷺ became angry but when he asked about coming across a lost goat, Rasūlullāh ﷺ replied: "It is for you, for your brother or for the wolf."

Ponder over this; Rasûlullâh ﷺ did not convey the anger of one offence into another issue but he responded in a very warm and affectionate manner.

2. When the child commits an offence, do not admonish him by criticising him or by weighing him against other children of his age. For instance, avoid berating the child by making statements like: "Look at Shakîl, he is your own cousin. He is so intelligent and well-mannered. Look at Jâwed, he is so hard working and studious and look at you. Look at Maryam, she is so courteous and industrious. She tops her class and you on the other hand are just wasting money and killing time." etc., etc. Such an attitude has a number of unfavourable factors attached to it. For example, the child will tend to develop an aversion for the other child. Similarly, if your child is aware of some shortcoming in the other child of which you are unaware of, your child will conclude that he has so many shortcomings and yet my father finds him so good. So in future I will also just put on a guise of graciousness and do whatever else that child is doing. If one day, overcome with fury, your child ever reveals that child's shortcoming to you, the spirit of modesty that supposed to have existed between father and son would cease to exist.

3. The third problem is that instead of regarding you as his mentor, the child will regard you as a constant nag and one who merely vents his anger for no particular reason. Instead of looking upon you as a headman, he will regard you as a hangman.

4. If the fault of the child's misdemeanour lies with the mother, don't ever reprimand her in front of the child; otherwise the child will regard you as the bully and his mother as the victim. This will diminish the child's love for you or it may reduce his mother's respect in his eyes.

5. If one of the locals complain about your child's misdeeds, do not punish the child in front of the complainant or even in his absence without investigating the matter thoroughly. Make certain you analyse the complaint meticulously because sometimes the child may be guiltless but out of fear of his father or any other senior person he is unable to express his innocence. In such a case, employing tact and affection, wheedle the whole story out of him. If he is undoubtedly guilty, lovingly and affectionately explain to him in private. If need be, you may also reprimand him. It is wholly inappropriate to beat or scold the child without investigating the complaint thoroughly. If the father is guilty of such an action, he will be declared as a disloyal father in the eyes of Allâh ﷻ and his attitude will cultivate seeds of hatred in the children's hearts.

Allâh ﷻ warns: "O People of Îmân! If an immoral person comes to you with any news (of a complaint etc.), scrutinize it thoroughly (if you want to implement what he reports) for fear of anyone being adversely afflicted out of ignorance and then you would be crestfallen at what you have done." *[Ma'âriful Qur'ân vol.8 p.103]*

Similarly, Rasûlullâh ﷺ is reported to have said: "For a man to verbally express whatever he hears is sufficient to declare him a liar."

This is why you should exhaustively investigate every complaint you receive about the child. For instance, if your neighbour complains that your son beat his son. Now instead of taking a cane and whacking your child, inform your neighbour that you will, Inshâ Allâh, soon investigate the matter and you will punish him if he is at fault. Thereafter, employing love and affection, ascertain the truth from the child. He will enlighten you about exactly what transpired. Perhaps the other child instigated the mischief and your son slapped him in retaliation or perhaps the other

child broke or snatched something from your child and he responded by beating him. In such a case, it would be cruel of you to punish your child and it may even make him chickenhearted in the future. He may not defend his rights in future. Allâh forbid, this chicken heartedness may even wreck his whole life.

If you analysed the situation at that moment in time, it will have two advantages; firstly, the true picture will emerge and if your child is at fault you will be able to rectify it. The second advantage is that if the other person laid a fictitious complaint, you will be saved from unduly punishing the child whilst the other person's audacity to fabricate complaints is reduced.

6. Don't ever backbite or speak ill about your wife, the children's mother, in front of them. For instance, don't tell the children that you prevented their mother from doing something and yet she does it. You asked her not to go to the market or to a certain person's place but she insists on going etc. etc. Similarly, don't criticise the wife solely on what the children say. For instance, when you return home in the evening and find that the wife is not around. The children inform you that she is gone shopping or to someone's house. Now don't go about yelling your head out: "Why doesn't she listen to me? She can't sit at home. I have prohibited her from leaving home but she is adamant!!"

Such an attitude will reduce the mother's worth in the children's eyes. The children will regard you as a tyrant and the mother as the victim because they don't understand the rationale behind your prohibitions. So instead of screaming your head out, sit down and wait patiently. Show the children some love and affection. Think of a valid excuse for her unexpected absence from home. Perhaps the baby fell ill and she took him to the hospital or perhaps she desperately needed some cooking ingredients from the shop or she went

to fetch something for you or perhaps her mother phoned and it was vital for her to respond immediately. When she returns you will discover what made her leave home. Nevertheless, when she returns and you are infuriated with her unwarranted departure from home, explain to her in private. You may even express your displeasure and annoyance but never in front of the children as this negatively influences their minds.

Similarly, even if you dislike the food prepared by your wife, instead of expressing your distaste at the table, commend her cooking. This is firstly, pleasing to Allâh ﷻ and it also boosts the wife's spirits. You will also be part of her heartfelt Du'âs. Secondly, you will be rewarded for implementing the Hadîth of Rasûlullâh ﷺ wherein he says: "If the food appears before you, partake of it and if you dislike it, refrain from eating it but do not find fault with it." Thirdly, this will engender love between the husband and wife. And sincere love between the husband and wife is the key to the treasures of Dîn and *dunyâ*. This will also teach the children to commend others and to exercise tolerance otherwise who knows, these children may even outdo us in finding fault with the food. This would subsequently tantamount to contempt of the food and contempt of their mother, which is a grave sin. And you will be held liable for this transgression.

7. If you or your wife, due to mental strain or physical weakness or any other Shar'î excuse, are unable to take good care of children coming in rapid succession, after consulting proficient 'Ulamâ or reliable Muftîs try to maintain a reasonable gap between two children. To begin with, this enables the mother to breastfeed the child properly within Shar'î restrictions without her falling pregnant in the interim. This subsequently enables the child to grow up into a healthy and strong man. Now when the mother completes the full term of breastfeeding and the weakness she suffered in the

process of pregnancy, childbirth and breastfeeding disappears, she is all set to conceive once again. This empowers her to fulfil the rights of both the children and also to rear them both correctly. This approach is beneficial to you, to your wife as well as your children.

8. When your sons reach a marriageable age, avoid getting two of them married together. Furthermore, make sure that two of your daughters-in-law neither reside together nor do they share the same kitchen. Living separately from the in-laws promises a great deal of comfort and tranquillity and prevents a great number of problems and hostilities. We will, Inshâ Allâh, discuss this issue at length elsewhere. May Allâh ﷻ grant us all the correct understanding. Âmîn.

9. In the child's eyes, you are a personality worth emulating. Be rest assured that a child unconsciously emulates his father in everything even if it is something utterly immoral. A person narrates one of his childhood incidents. Once he asked the maid to fetch him a glass of water. Instead of handing it over to him, she placed the glass on the ledge and moved off. He took hold of the glass and flung it on the wall and he mechanically started hurling abusive words at the maid. Upon this, his father started bellowing a salvo of abuse. "You scoundrel," he screeched. "Don't you have any modesty left in you? How dare you lob abuse at the maid? You conduct yourself like this in front of your father? Go and drown yourself!" etc., etc.

Think for yourself. Who is to be blamed for this behaviour? Unquestionably the child repeatedly heard his father using abusive language and he inadvertently picked it up from him. To add fuel to the fire, the father employs offensive language to warn the child about using offensive language. In other words, he is using poison to eradicate poison. How outlandish! Therefore, do not admonish or swear your

servants, domestics or wife in front of your children. If you have to rebuke them, do it in private. Remember, you will never be able to rear your children suitably by employing anger. When confronted with something that makes you angry suppress it. With such an attitude you will be portraying a physical model to your children on how they should react when confronted with something that enrages them. Your children will ascertain that they are children of a man who, even when violently enraged, maintains a smile on his face and mild words on his tongue. May Allâh ﷻ grant us all the appropriate techniques in advising our children. Âmîn.

The Second Serious Blunder

In his discourse entitled 'The rights of children', Hadrat Maulânâ Muftî Muhammad Shafî' Sâhib ﷺ says: "It is the Sunnah (norm) of Allâh ﷻ- as explained in the Hadîth – that when a person aims to please someone and in the process he displeases Allâh ﷻ, He (Allâh ﷻ) grants supremacy and dominance to the same person over him. For instance, if a person commits a sin just to please someone else and in the process he displeases Allâh ﷻ, then Allâh ﷻ will grant dominance to this person over him."

Today our condition is such that just to please our children we refrain from imparting Dîn to them. We are only concerned about their materialistic potentials or about their future prospects of earning or about their reputation in society. Due to our reluctance to impart Dîn, we have drawn the displeasure of Allâh ﷻ. Subsequently, the children whom we aspired to please eventually preside over their parents.

Look at society today and you will witness how defiant the children are to their parents. They have become a real pest and a form of retribution to their parents. The reason for this is that the parents dispatched the child to an irreligious environment simply to eat and live better or to get a better job in the future. They have dumped him in an environment

that doesn't care at all about the parents honour and obedience. Tomorrow when this child pursues his base desires, the parents will wail that they gave him an education for an admirable cause but regrettably he has taken another course altogether. Actually what happened is that you set him onto a path that subsequently led him to gain dominance over you. The tracks that you have posted him onto and the education you want him to pursue demonstrate what the worth of the parents is. The culture of this education confirms that when the parents reach old age they are not fit to be kept at home but they should rather be dispatched to an old age or nursing home. Then the son doesn't even stagger by to see how his parents are faring.

Father in the Nursing Home

We have come across numerous incidents in western countries where when the father died and the son was informed of his death by the supervisor of the home, he responds unsympathetically by saying: "Well, I'm sorry to hear about this. Kindly do me a favour and make the funeral arrangements and send me the bill. I will sort it out."

We used to hear about such incidents in the Western world but just recently someone informed me of an old age home right here in Karachi. A similar incident occurred here as well. One of the residents of the home passed away. When the son was informed, he promised to come as soon as possible but he subsequently excused himself on the pretext of some important meeting or the other. He requested the nursing home to make the necessary funeral arrangements. These are the children whom you made every effort to please at the expense of displeasing Allâh ﷻ. Now they are dominant over you. The Hadîth clearly states that the person whom you try to please at the expense of displeasing Allâh ﷻ, He will give dominance to that person over you.

'As you Sow, So shall you Reap'

Now when the children are dominating the parents, they sit and wail that the children are on the wrong track. Well, you were the one who condemned him to this path. You are responsible for the transformation of his thinking and for his revolutionary ideology. Now you will suffer the consequences. As a poet says: "You have strapped my hands and feet and hurled me into the sea and yet you ask me to ensure that I don't get wet."

If only you imparted to him some Qur'ânic knowledge or a bit of Hadîth. If only you prompted him so sit in a Dînî (religious) environment. If only you educated him on the subject of the Hadîth appearing in *Mishkât, Kitâbul-'Ilm vol.1 p.32* wherein Rasûlullâh ﷺ says: "When a person departs from this world, only three things are of benefit to him; the first is (religious) knowledge from which people benefit. (For instance, he compiles a book and people take advantage of its teachings or he imparts Dînî knowledge and his students subsequently disseminate this knowledge. The deceased also benefits from this.)

The second thing is perpetual charity. (For instance, he builds a Musjid, Madrasah, hospital, well or anything of this nature that is beneficial to the people. The reward for such an action perseveres even after his death.) The third thing mentioned is pious children whom he leaves behind." (They will make Du'â for him after his death. He will be rewarded for the actions of his children even after his death. After all it is thanks to the upbringing of the parents that the children accomplish something. The children's good deeds are also recorded in favour of the parents.

If only the parents imparted this Hadîth to their children, the father wouldn't have been reduced to passing his days in an old age nursing home. Since the parents failed to commit

the child to the right path, they are today witnessing the bitter fruits of their past endeavours.

The Ambiyâ's ﷺ Concern for their Children

Leading children towards the pathways of Dîn is as imperative as one's own spiritual improvement. Just speaking to them in a perfunctory manner is not enough until and unless it is accompanied by enthusiasm and commitment just as you wouldn't sit in peace if you see your child wandering towards the fire unless you physically draw him away from it. The same spirit should be applied in his general upbringing as well. The Holy Qur'ân is replete in highlighting this point.

In reference to the incidents of the Ambiyâ ﷺ Allâh Ta'âlâ describes in the Holy Qur'ân:

"And he (Hadrat Ismâ'îl ﷺ) used to instruct his family (in particular) about Salâh and Zakâh." *[Sûrah Maryam verse 55, Ma'ariful Qur'ân vol.6 p.98]*

At another instance, Allâh ﷻ instructs his beloved Rasûl ﷺ:

"And command your family (relatives and believers) to observe Salâh and remain steadfast (yourself) as well." *[Sûrah Tâhâ verse 132]*

The sequence of the aforementioned verse is strange. Apparently it should have read "you remain steadfast upon Salâh and command your family to do the same" but the sequence has been turned around. This sequence is indicative of the fact that your instruction to your family and children regarding Salâh will not be effective until you are more committed and steadfast than they are.

If you instruct your children to offer Salâh and you are not staunch yourself, your instruction to them to perform Salâh will be ineffective. Therefore, one of the pre-requisites of instructing the household members to perform Salâh is to ensure that you are more devoted to its observance than they are and that you prove yourself to be an ideal example.

The Third Serious Blunder

It has been narrated in the Hadîth that a woman summoned her child to come to her. When the child showed a bit of reluctance, she enticed him by promising to give him something. The child eventually came to her. Upon this, Rasûlullâh ﷺ asked the woman: "When you promised to give him something, did you really mean it?" The lady replied: "Yes, I meant to give him some dates I had with me." Rasûlullâh ﷺ remarked: "If you had no intention of giving him anything, you would have been guilty of falsehood and sin." In other words, you would have been sinful because you made a false promise to the child. It is as though, from a very tender age, you are suggesting to the child that it is acceptable to speak lies.

In short, the aforementioned verse of the Holy Qur'ân clearly implies that before you instruct your family members to do something you should be more devoted and particular than they are.

Technique of Upbringing

Hadrat Abu Hurayrah ؓ narrates that Hadrat Hasan ؓ once got hold of a date from the goods of charity and placed it into his mouth. When Rasûlullâh ﷺ saw this, he exclaimed: "Kakh! Kakh! (An expression of disgust normally used to admonish a child or to demand that he spits out whatever he has in his mouth.) In short, he demanded that he spit the date out. Rasûlullâh ﷺ then said: "Don't you know? We Banû Hâshim do not consume goods of charity." *[Jâmi'ul Usûl vol.4 p.657 Hadîth no.2748]*

Hadrat Hasan ؓ was the beloved grandson of Rasûlullâh ﷺ. His love for him may be determined from the following incident: Once Rasûlullâh ﷺ was busy delivering a sermon in Masjidun Nabawî when Hadrat Hasan ؓ (who was no more than a small boy at that time) came stumbling into the

Musjid. Rasûlullâh ﷺ got down from the pulpit, picked him up and placed him on his lap. *[Mishkât vol.2 p.571]*

Sometimes, whilst offering Salâh, Hadrat Hasan ﷺ would climb onto his shoulders. As he is about to go into Sajdah, Rasûlullâh ﷺ would sometimes put him down with one hand or sometimes he would hold him onto his lap. He would often say: "These children are (a source) of miserliness and chicken heartedness." *[Ibn Mâjah p.269]*

On the one hand Rasûlullâh ﷺ was extremely fond of Hadrat Hasan ﷺ but when he instinctively placed the date into his mouth, Rasûlullâh ﷺ couldn't bear him eating it. However, since the idea was to nurture him accordingly, he at once demanded he spit it out saying that such food does not befit them.

The Bounds of Affection

The abovementioned Hadith also indicates that rearing of children commences with little and seemingly trivial things. This moulds their minds, which subsequently moulds their lives. This is the Sunnah of Rasûlullâh ﷺ but today we are subjected to a very weird state of affairs. The custom of parents admonishing their children has totally vanished from our lives. Parents of those days also loved their children but they loved them within reason.

Today's 'love' for the children is such that no matter what the children do or what they are guilty of, parents fail to reprimand their children. The parents just brush their misdemeanours off under the delusion that they are after all only innocent children. They are free to do as they please. There is no need to place any restrictions upon them. Alas! If the children are innocent and immature, the parents are not immature. We as parents have an obligation to fulfil. If a child does something unethical or immoral or he does something contrary to Sharî'ah, the parents are required to

point it out to him. If the child grows up to be immoral, the parents will be held liable because, at the very outset, they failed to mould his life accordingly. In short, this Hadîth indicates that even seemingly trivial actions of the children should be closely monitored.

The Etiquette of Eating

Hadrat 'Umar bin Abû Salmah ﷺ was the stepson of Rasûlullâh ﷺ. He was actually the son of Umme Salmah *radiallâhû 'anhâ* from her first husband Abû Salmah. When Umme Salmah *radiallâhû 'anhâ* married Rasûlullâh ﷺ, he also accompanied her to Rasûlullâh ﷺ's home. This was how he became the stepson of Rasûlullâh ﷺ. Rasûlullâh ﷺ was very fond of this child. He doted over this boy.

He ('Umar ﷺ) narrates: "When I was still a young boy in the care of Rasûlullâh ﷺ, I was eating with him and my hand continued revolving around the plate. (In other words, I was eating from all sides of the plate). Upon this Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "Boy, say Bismillâh, eat with the right hand and eat from the side that is closest to you. It is inappropriate to eat from all sides of the plate." *[Jâmi'ul Usûl vol.7 p.388 Hadîth no.5445]*

This clearly demonstrates that Rasûlullâh ﷺ would admonish young children for seemingly trivial issues and he used to teach them the correct etiquette.

Another Sahâbî, Hadrat 'Ikrâsh bin Zuwaib ﷺ narrates: "I was once in the presence of Rasûlullâh ﷺ when the food came. I started eating a morsel from here and a morsel from there. I started eating from all over the plate. Rasûlullâh ﷺ took hold of my hand and said: "'Ikrâsh! Eat from one side as the food is the same all round. Eating from all round is a sign of bad manners and insolence. Eat from one spot only." Hadrat 'Ikrâsh ﷺ says: "I then started eating from one spot only. After eating, a huge tray of dates was presented to us. Since Rasûlullâh ﷺ instructed me to eat

from one side only, I started eating the dates from one side of the tray. Rasûlullâh ﷺ on the other hand was picking and choosing from all around the tray. When he saw me picking from one side only, he remarked: "'Ikrâsh! Eat from whichever side you wish as the dates are all of a different variety." [Mishkât p.367]

In this Hadîth Rasûlullâh ﷺ teaches us that if the platter consists of a single item, one should eat from one side only and if it consists of a variety of items one may eat from whichever side one chooses.

Rasûlullâh ﷺ was very vigilant of his own children as well as the Sahâbah as far as such seemingly inconsequential things are concerned. This etiquette should be implemented by yourself and imparted to your family members as well. These are Islâmic etiquette through which the Islâmic society is distinguished.

Education before the Age of Seven

Hadrat 'Abdullâh bin 'Umar رضي الله عنه narrates that Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "Instruct your children to offer Salâh when they are seven years of age. In other words, emphasise on them to perform Salâh. Although Salâh is not obligatory upon them, in order to develop the habit, stress upon them to observe Salâh from this age. If they discard Salâh, beat them when they are ten years of age. Also, by this age, separate their beds. Don't allow two children to sleep on the same bed." [Jâmi'ul Usûl vol.5 p.87 Hadîth no. 3243]

This Hadîth teaches us to ensure that they perform their Salâh when they are seven years of age. This clearly indicates that it is inappropriate to impose on them before the age of seven. Hakîmul-Ummah Hadrat Thânwî *rahmatullâhi 'alaih* says: "This Hadîth demonstrates that the child should not be charged with any responsibility before the age of seven. Some people compel their children to fast

during the month of Ramadân long before they reach this age."

Hadrat Thânwî *rahmatullâhi 'alaih* was totally against this. He would often say: "You are nonchalant about the child performing Salâh before the age of seven but you are anxious to make him fast long before this. This is unacceptable." Similarly, any attempt to compel them to perform Salâh before this age is also unacceptable. This is why it is mentioned that children under the age of seven should not be brought to the Musjid. However, in order to get him accustomed to the Musjid, it is all right to bring them to the Musjid now and then provided there is no fear of them soiling the Musjid but to insist that they formally come to the Musjid before this age is incorrect.

In fact our seniors are of the opinion that to compel them to study also before this age is improper. Before this age, teach the child whilst playing around with him but to burden him with a formal education or to make him a proper student is not appropriate. Nowadays our society is faced with a very weird problem; the moment the child is three the parents start getting apprehensive about his formal education. This is incorrect. When he is three, educate him at home. Teach him the Kalimah of Allâh ﷻ and His Rasûl ﷺ and some basic Dînî issues. Teach him whatever you can at home but to despatch him to nursery school or to play school as a formal student is objectionable.

Bounds of Punishment

Bear in mind that it is permissible for the teacher or the parent to beat the child lightly to an extent that the beating leaves no impression on the child's body. The pitiless walloping administered nowadays is definitely not acceptable. Sometimes the child is made to bleed or subject to physical injury and abuse. This is a sin.

Hadrat Thânwî *rahmatullâhi 'alaih* says: "I wonder what form the forgiveness of such a sin will take. Who will he (the teacher or elder) ask for forgiveness? Obviously he can't ask the child to forgive him because the child is unable to forgive. Even if an immature child pardons the person, legally it is ineffectual. This is why I can't fathom how this sin can be forgiven in this world. The magnitude of this sin can be clearly gauged from this." This is why the teacher or the parent should ensure that they avoid beating the child in a manner that is injurious or in a manner that leaves marks on the child's body. Yes, where it becomes necessary to punish the child as a last resort, the child may be beaten lightly.

This is why Hadrat Thânwî *rahmatullâhi 'alaih* mentioned a very strange prescription, a prescription only he could have devised. It is worth remembering. He says: "When you perceive the need to punish or reprimand the child, do not do so whilst you are angry. When your anger simmers down later on, punish the child whilst feigning anger. If you punish the child whilst you are genuinely angry, you are bound to overstep the limits and since you *have* to discipline the child, punish him whilst pretending to be angry. With such a technique, you will attain the objective whilst remaining within the bounds as well."

Hadrat Thânwî *rahmatullâhi 'alaih* goes on further: "I have taken advantage of this technique throughout my life. I have never hit or rebuked anyone whilst angry. I normally summon the person after my anger cools down and punish or reprimand him whilst feigning anger. This ensures that I stay within the limits. A person seething with fury very rarely remains within the boundaries."

Method of Discipline

Hadrat Thânwî *rahmatullâhi 'alaih* used to mention a basic principle of discipline. It is not a general rule as such. The

temperaments of people differ but this elementary principle of discipline may be implemented in most cases. When a person is doing something unseemly, it is inappropriate to punish him whilst he is engaged in that action. An instantaneous reaction from you may even prove disastrous.

Admonish or punish the child only afterwards. Furthermore, admonishing the child repeatedly for every single transgression is also not appropriate. You may explain to him in one sitting that he committed a certain offence on so and so date and so forth and you may punish him once but do not pester him constantly. The core of anger is found in every single temperament but it is an emotion that is extremely difficult to control once ignited. A person overcome with rage is unable to control himself. So this technique of discipline as applied by Hadrat Thânwî *rahmatullâhi 'alaih* is quite extraordinary and it is also a perfect remedy to rein in one's anger. *[Extracted from Islâhî Khutubât vol.4 p.18]*

Terms of Address

Address your children by their full names or with phrases of love and affection. Summon them with such words of adoration that they look forward to being summoned and the moment they hear these expressions they become enthusiastic to carry out your instructions to the letter. For instance, summon them with words like son, daddy's life, darling, dearest etc.

The love and affection such phrases embrace and the delight one enjoys from them may never be realised even by addressing them by their own names. This will only be appreciated when there is nobody left in this world to address them with such terms of affection. Then they will really be nostalgic of the past. Secondly, addressing them in this manner lends more effect to the advice that is to follow. The moment the child hears these words of love, his heart becomes more receptive to carry out the instruction as

conscientiously as possible. Take a peek at the Qur'ân and you will notice that the Ambiyâ ﷺ and Auliyâ رحمهم الله advised their sons with the phrase 'Yâ Bunayya' or 'Yâ Baniyya' which literally means "O my beloved son or sons!"

Hadrat Ibrâhîm ﷺ and Hadrat Ya'qûb ﷺ advised their sons in the following manner: "O My Sons! Allâh has selected the Dîn for you. So do not die except as Muslims." *[Sûrah Baqarah verse 132]*

Hadrat Nûh ﷺ addressed his son thus: "O my beloved son! Get on board with us and do not join the disbelievers." *[Sûrah Hûd verse 42]*

Hadrat Ya'qûb ﷺ cautioned his sons as follows: "O my beloved sons! Do not enter from one door but from various doors." *[Sûrah Yûsuf verse 67]*

Hadrat Luqmân ﷺ advised his son thus: "O my beloved son! Do not assign partners unto Allâh as polytheism is a great injustice." *[Sûrah Luqmân verse 13]*

At another juncture, he advised: "O my beloved son! Establish Salâh and enjoin good and forbid evil and exercise patience upon whatever afflicts you. This is of (the feats) of great resolve." *[Sûrah Luqmân verse 17]*

Ponder over the aforementioned terms of address. The Ambiyâ ﷺ didn't just apply the word 'Ibnî' but its diminutive 'Bunayya' as a term of affection and love. These phrases of warmth are most impressive in entrenching the father's advice within the hearts of the children. In this regard, we transcribe a few points from the lecture of Muftî Taqî 'Uthmânî *madda zilluhû* entitled 'The rearing of children'.

The Expression 'Son' - An Affectionate Mode of Address

Muftî Taqî Sâhib says in his sermon entitled 'The rearing of children': "Shaikhul-Islâm Maulânâ Shabbîr Ahmad 'Uthmânî رحمه الله was an illustrious scholar and jurist. Let alone Pakistan, he had no match in the entire world as far as *'Ilm* and virtue is concerned. The whole world acknowledged his superiority in Islâmic knowledge. He would be addressed with Shaikhul-Islâm or 'Allâmah and a host of other grand titles. He would occasionally come to visit us at home when my paternal grandmother was still alive. My grandmother was his maternal aunt (his mother's brother's wife). In other words, he was her nephew. This is why she would address him as 'son!' She used to make Du'â for him with words like: "Son! May you live long" etc. We found it somewhat strange that a man whom the world calls "Shaikhul-Islâm" is being addressed with words like 'Son!' etc. However, 'Allâmah Shabbîr Ahmad رحمه الله used to say: "I come to Muftî Sâhib's (Muftî Shafî's) house for two reasons; one is to visit Muftî Sâhib and the second is that nobody in the entire world addresses me as 'son' besides this lady. I come here just to hear her addressing me in this manner. I don't experience the same joy and warmth in other forms of titles and address as I experience in being addressed with just this one word, 'son'.

Only those who are acquainted with the zeal of the person expressing these words would appreciate this. Only they know what a profound blessing it is to be addressed with the word 'son'. A time will come when a person will fervently yearn to hear such expressions of affection.

Hadrat Doctor 'Abdul-Hay *rahmatullâhi 'alaih* says: "On the strength of the close relationship of Îmân a believer enjoys with Allâh ﷻ, the Holy Qur'ân repetitively addresses the believers thus: "O You who believe!" This can be compared to a father addressing his child with the word 'Son!' The

purpose behind this is to relay to the child that this expression is followed by love, affection and advice. Time and again Allâh ﷻ addresses the believers in this fashion.

For instance, at one juncture, Allâh ﷻ cautions: "O You who believe! Protect yourselves and your family from a fire." What is the characteristic of this fire? Allâh ﷻ further elaborates: "A fire (whose fuel is not wood and coal but) a fire whose fuel is people and stones. Appointed over the fire are harsh and inconsiderate angels. They do no defy Allâh in whatever He instructs them to do and they perform exactly as they are commanded." *[Sûrah Tahrim verse 6]*

Selfishness is Insufficient for Deliverance

In this verse, Allâh ﷻ reminds us that redemption in the hereafter is not confined to protecting one's own interests only. Don't just be concerned about your own actions and that's it. Don't be nonchalant about your family. You should protect them from the fire as well. Nowadays we observe what the condition around us is like; a person is selfishly pious. He is devoted to his Salâh, he is in the first Saff in the Musjid. He fasts, pays his Zakât dues and spends freely in the path of Allâh ﷻ and implements all the divine commandments of Allâh ﷻ but look at his children! Look at his wife and family! Between them there is a difference of chalk and cheese. One is going to the West and the other to the East. They are completely indifferent to their Salâh. There is no perception whatsoever about fulfilling their Shar'i obligations. They don't even care to regard a sin as a sin. The wife and children are trapped in a vortex of sin but the father is pleased with himself standing in the first row performing Salâh with Jamâ'at.

Bear in mind that if a person is unconcerned about protecting his children from the fire, his own deliverance from the fire cannot be guaranteed. He won't be able to get away on the grounds that each person presides over his own

affairs and the actions of the children are beyond his control. No, you are responsible to protect them from the fire. If you failed in this obligation you will be held liable in the hereafter.

And if the Children Fail to Comply?

In the aforementioned verse, Allâh ﷻ instructs us to protect ourselves as well as our families from the fire of Hell. Actually, the verse alludes to the answer of an objection that many of us may encounter. When the parents are advised to make their children Huffâz of the Qur'ân or 'Ulamâ of Dîn or when they are instructed to entice their children towards Dîn and to ensure that they abstain from sin, the parents generally respond that they left no stone unturned in bringing them closer to Dîn but what can we do? The environment has spiritually decayed beyond restoration. We have advised our wives and children time after time but to no avail. Bewitched by the rancidness of the times, they have taken to another road of immorality. They are not prepared to deviate from this road of immorality. They are responsible for their own actions whilst we are responsible for ours. What can we do?

How do you Protect them from Fire?

The Holy Qur'ân uses the word 'fire' and provides the answer to the aforementioned objection. In principle, the parents will, Inshâ Allâh, be absolved of their obligations if they made an all out effort to protect their children from irreligiousness. In this case, the parents are not to blame and the children will be held liable for their actions. However, it needs to be seen exactly to what extent the parents attempted to protect their children. The Holy Qur'ân uses the phrase 'fire' as an indication that the parents should protect their children from sinning just as they would protect them from fire.

Just assume there is a gigantic fire burning. You are convinced that a person who goes into it is not going to come out alive. If your child advances towards it under the delusion that it is something beautiful, what would you do? Would you merely make do with advising him from far off? Would you just casually caution him: "Son, don't go near the fire. It is very dangerous. If you get burnt you may well lose your life." Will any parent be content with such lip service? In spite of cautioning the child, if the child leaps into the fire, will the parents be absolved of all blame on the grounds that they cautioned the child and he refused to listen? He went into the fire of his own accord, so what can they do? No parent will assume such an attitude. If they are indeed parents of the child and they observe their child wandering towards the fire, they will be unable to rest in peace. Their life would become a nightmare and they won't sit in peace. As long as they don't clutch the child in their arms they won't sit at ease.

Allāh ﷻ says that you don't stop at mere lip service in deterring your children from the insignificant fire of this world then why do you suppose mere lip service is sufficient in protecting your children from the fire of Jahannam that is so much more intense than the fire of this world? Therefore, it is not so simple to claim that you have fulfilled your responsibilities by verbally advising and cautioning them.

For Allāh's Sake don't be a Brutal and Authoritarian Father

The father can be likened to a protective shelter for his children. If the children have complete confidence in anyone, it is the father. If they regard anyone as strong and solid it is the father. This is why when the son of the weakest or poorest of men fights with another child and he feels unsure of himself, or when he is intimidated by others, he counteracts this threat by saying: "I'll tell my father about this!"

Similarly, the child regards his father as a very rich man. This is why he makes demands on the father. He doesn't understand the financial position of the father.

For Allāh's sake, do not dash the high hopes of these innocent blooming children with your foul temper and insensitive temperament. Don't start yelling and shrieking your head off the moment you enter the house. Perhaps the child had eagerly pinned his hopes on his father coming home and bringing him some goodies or perhaps his father may just take him out somewhere. All his high hopes are thwarted with your shouting and hollering and he scampers away to one corner and sits down utterly terrified of his father.

Similarly, if the child is guilty of an offence and you threaten him with words like: "If you do this again I will...." In such a situation the child, instead of looking up to you as an affectionate mentor, will take you as a cruel autocrat. If this attitude persists, the future does not bode very well. The future of this child is threatened with gloom. There are so many incidents we have witnessed ourselves where the children rebelled against the cruel father. Some children harbour such resentment for the father that if they had their way they would have taken him to court.

Nawāz was a very adorable young lad. He also yearned for his father's love and affection. He also wanted his father to cherish him, take him out and bring some goodies for him as other fathers do. But, unfortunately, his father turned out to be ruthless and ill tempered. After work, when he came home, Nawāz would dash to the door and scream: "Daddy! Daddy!" His father would scold him: "Get out of here! I am tired after a hard day's work and to top it up you are clinging onto me!" Poor Nawāz would sneak away. Sometimes, when he got close to his father, he would holler: "Get lost! Keep your hands off me. You will soil my clothes." What pitiless treatment to an innocent child. For

trivial things the father would shriek his head off and throw the whole household into turmoil. Not only that, he would then pull Nawâz's ear so violently that it would become livid. Time passed on and Nawâz grew up but his hatred for his father also developed proportionately. Today Nawâz is twenty-six years old but he has not an ounce of love for his father. He says that had it not been for the fear of Allâh ﷻ and fear of public humiliation, I would have done some rather outrageously crazy things.

So treat your children with love and affection. If you enter the house and the children or the wife upset you, relax. Exercise patience. Once your anger cools down, advise them accordingly. A bit of patience will go a much longer way in making our children more appreciative children.

When you return home from the office or shop, try and bring something for the children. Then with love and affection, either feed it to them or distribute it amongst them. Display your love and fondness for them so that they eagerly await your arrival and make Du'âs for you. Your conduct should not make them wish that you were dead. If the children's hands or clothes are dirty and their mother is busy, why don't you clean them up? In this regard, Imâm Tirmidhi *rahmatullâhi 'alaih* relates that Hadrat 'Âishah *radiallâhu 'anhâ* narrates: "Rasûlullâh ﷺ was once about to clean Hadrat Usâmah's ؓ nose when I requested him to allow me to do it. Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "O Âishah! Love this child as I love him." *[Tirmidhi vol.2 p.222]*

When the child is dirty, instead of waiting for the mother, the father should clean the child up and change his clothes etc. If you form an intention of reviving the Sunnah of Rasûlullâh ﷺ it would "add lustre to gold". This would yield a dual benefit; the child will be tidy and clean and the wife will also be delighted. She would be pleased with her husband's outstanding character since he regards the child as his own children and he also shares all responsibilities of the

household. This is also pleasing to Allâh ﷻ as this is an act of sheer humility. When Rasûlullâh ﷺ, the leader of both the worlds, could clean the mucus of a child then who am I to shirk away from such chores?

If a Muslim father practically implements this Sunnah within his household, it would solve a host of domestic issues. Quite often, the source of problems between the spouses is the lack of the husband's support. He is quick to reproach her with words like: "You don't take enough care of the kids! You keep yourself filthy and the kids filthy as well! You don't teach the children anything. You are ignorant and you propose to make them ignorant as well!" etc., etc.

Why doesn't the husband realise that just as these tasks are the mother's responsibility, they are the husband's – in other words the children's father's – responsibility as well. Our society has divided these responsibilities whereas morally and religiously they are the husband's responsibility as well.

Hadrat Usâmah ؓ narrates: "One night I went to Rasûlullâh ﷺ for some work or the other. When Rasûlullâh ﷺ emerged from the house, he held something wrapped in his arms. I didn't know what it was. After concluding my work, I asked him what he had wrapped up in his arms. As he opened it, I saw Hasan ؓ and Husain ؓ bundled up in a cloth on both sides of his hips." (In other words, both of them were bundled up on Rasûlullâh ﷺ's lap.) Rasûlullâh ﷺ then said: "These are my children and the children of my daughter. O Allâh! I love these two children and you also love them. O Allâh! Love the person who loves them also."
[Tirmidhi vol.2 p.217]

Similarly, Hadrat Abû Buraidah ؓ narrates that Rasûlullâh ﷺ was once delivering a sermon when Hadrat Hasan ؓ and Hadrat Husain ؓ both wearing (striped) red *kurtâs*, came stumbling along. When Rasûlullâh ﷺ saw them, he instantly

descended from the pulpit, lifted them up and seated them in front of him. [Tirmidhi vol.2 p.218]

Just look at the Master's ﷺ affectionate manner in dealing with children. All of us are members of the Ummah of this unreservedly affectionate man. Hence, it is imperative upon all of us to bear in mind Rasulullah's ﷺ caring attitude and act accordingly. Children should not be terrified of you. They should not scurry for cover the moment you enter the house. They should not be alarmed by your presence as though you are a snake or lion.

Imposing on Children

When your children reach puberty, make certain that you don't impose on them. Yes, as much as possible before puberty, you may cast them within an Islâmic mould and make them bend to your desires. Dye them with an Islâmic hue and mould them according to your preference either with compassion or if the need arises with a bit of rigidity but after puberty if you want them to do something, ask them with kindness in an encouraging tone instead of an imposing one. There are a number of benefits in employing this approach. For instance, your children won't find it so offensive and since you requested them with compassion, the chances of them carrying it out are far greater. If, Allâh forbid, they fail to carry it out, they will not be guilty of disobeying the father, which in itself has catastrophic implications.

This is why the 'Ulamâ say that when you wish to instruct your mature or married children to do something, avoid imposing on them with words like: "Do this" or "don't do that" because if they fail to comply, they will be sinful. Instead of commanding them to do something, it is more appropriate to say: "Son, if you do so and so thing it would be better" or "such and such thing is normally done like this" or "if you do such and such thing it would be better." In

such a case, if the child fails to comply, he will not be sinful. [Khulâsatul Fatâwâ vol.4 p.340]

Similarly, after adulthood, if he is inclined to take up a certain profession or he aspires to take up a specific line of work, as long as his aspirations are within the framework of Shari'ah don't enforce your preferences upon him. Assist him and advise him instead. Of course, if he wishes to do something that is prohibited, don't endorse it. Explain to him yourself and through his friends, the worldly and afterlife detriments of such an action. Make an all out effort to prevent him from taking up such vocations even if they are more lucrative. For instance, if he wishes to work in a conventional bank or insurance industry or he wishes to open a video store etc. In such a case, don't ever support him, neither financially nor morally. All the same, encourage him to take up something that is acceptable in Sharî'ah.

Similarly, if you find your son's actions unpalatable, don't admonish him right away but deliberate over it with a cool mind. Consult with the seniors and solicit their advice and then take the necessary steps. Don't be stern with him or rebuke him the moment he does something wrong. Although this would temporarily cool things down, it is not a lasting solution. If, Allâh forbid, the son also stoops down to brazen defiance of the father, the outcome would be catastrophic.

Also bear in minds that whilst consulting someone avoid a grumbling tone of complaint. Especially after marriage, if you are unhappy about your son or daughter-in-law's actions or you observe that your son is giving more preference to his wife over his mother or he is unfairly siding with his wife, don't ever humiliate him or impose on him in front of his wife. Exercise a bit of tolerance at that moment. Your wee bit of patience will make him indebted to you. After deliberating over the issue, explain to him in private. This will ensure your honour remains intact and you will have no complain about your son defying you nor will

you suffer any misgivings about him being captivated by the charms of his wife.

Every single action of Rasûlullâh ﷺ and the Sahâbah ؓ is an example for us to conform to. It is reported in the books of Hadîth that Hadrat 'Abdullâh bin 'Umar ؓ married a woman detested by his father, Hadrat 'Umar ؓ. Hadrat 'Umar ؓ instructed him to divorce her but since there was nothing evidently deplorable about her, Hadrat 'Abdullâh ؓ was thrown into a quandary of indecisiveness. Hadrat 'Umar ؓ didn't lean on him to divorce her but he notified Rasûlullâh ﷺ about what had transpired between them. Rasûlullâh ﷺ summoned Hadrat 'Abdullâh ؓ and upon questioning him, Hadrat 'Abdullâh ؓ submitted: "O Rasûlullâh ﷺ! I love the woman." Notwithstanding his profound love for her, Rasûlullâh ﷺ insisted he obeys his father. Hadrat 'Abdullâh ؓ promptly divorced her. *[Tirmidhi p.226]*

From this we ascertain that if the son is indisposed to adhere to the father's wishes, the father may get through to him via a senior 'Âlim or his friend or perhaps his uncle or anyone else but the son should definitely not be compelled.

Corporal Punishment Conceivably Leads to Criminality

"Youth kills himself over father's reproach"
"Student swallows rat poison after father's punishment over absenteeism"
"Boy commits suicide after father's admonishment".

Many such headlines grace our daily newspapers day after day. Such incidents actually reflect the outmoded traditions of our society in which some parents and teachers consider the maltreatment of children as their prerogative. However, they are utterly ignorant of the fact that such austere measures of discipline are psychologically and physically detrimental to the capabilities of the child. Sometimes the parents, frustrated by their poverty stricken circumstances,

tend to vent their anger over their young children. This destroys the intellectual potential of the child.

A child, whether he hails from a rich home or a poor home, his thinking and aspirations are the same but parents who are unable to fulfil the demands of their children, instead of explaining to them and pacifying them, resort to beating their children to gain control over them. This subsequently leads to the development of an inferiority complex. Such children either run away from home or seek refuge in immoral circles. In due course, such children turn to crime.

We have carried out a survey involving parents, teachers, psychologists and other experts on the problem surrounding the inappropriate austerity of the parents. On the basis of this survey we have come to certain conclusions that we wish to highlight at this point. Perhaps highlighting the negative tendencies that stem from severity would discourage the perpetrator from going any further as such severity does more harm than any good.

Speaking about the severity of his teacher, a student by the name of Khurram says: "Whenever I fail to complete my homework, my teacher, without even attempting to ascertain the reason, gives me a resounding smack first. She thinks that we will remember the clout and ensure we complete our homework on time." Khurram also says: "My mother is a very affectionate and loving person. However, when my father returns all bushed up from the office, he starts hurling abuse at me over the most trivial of offences. If we protest, he beats us up. This is why my mother puts us off to sleep before my father returns home. When Khurram's father, 'Alî Rahmân Siddiqî, was asked about beating his children, he retorted: "These are my children. Whatever I do with them is none of your business."

Shedding light on the negative impact of beating children, behavioural experts say that reward and punishment both

are necessary but as far as punishment is concerned, corporal punishment should be limited and should be meted out in extreme circumstances only. Corporal punishment ruins the child's personality. There are a number of other forms of punishment the parents can resort to. For instance, the parent may express anger or put up an act of giving the child the cold shoulder or make the child perform Salātut Taubah or make him write out a few pagess or get him to search for a list of difficult words in the dictionary or any such measure that would straighten out the child.

On the contrary, measures of austerity tend to develop a complex of inferiority which brings to the fore a multitude of negative tendencies. The child begins to lie, he will withhold or conceal certain things from you, he may harass his other siblings as an expression of his anger, he may lose interest in his studies etc. Sometimes this may even lead to horrifying consequences; the child, out of fear of his parents or teachers, may abscond from home in panic or he might even contemplate suicide.

Hence, in order to thwart such a scenario, the child should be brought up in a loving and caring atmosphere. A loving approach is more conducive in rectifying his faults, which would in turn assist in developing a resilient personality. Most parents grumble about their children's negligence and misconduct. The main reason for this is that the child tends to act extraordinarily obstinate due to the parent's harsh punishment. So the first and foremost solution to the problem is that the parents should approach their children with love and affection. If the need for reproach does arise, they should talk to the child in privacy. One of the members of a certain trust reports: "Most of the children appearing in our home are sent to us by the police after they are arrested for some crime or the other. On analysing their domestic environment, we can safely conclude that due to their parents' failure to treat them satisfactorily, the children seek refuge beyond the home environment. They then fall pray to

the wrong crowd and subsequently turn to crime. The parents form the first school of the children. Instead of beating them, the parents should resort to alternative remedial measures."

In the children's home, run under the auspices of the trust, there are a great number of children who have fled home due to their parents' or teachers' unwarranted sternness. One of the administrators of this trust by the name of Fahîm says: "Quite a number of the children present in this home are those who, frustrated by the harshness of their step father or step mother, flee from home. The number of children who come from households that are distant from Dīn is far greater." He further adds: "With the assistance of Allah ﷻ, these children are sheltered once they come into our care but children who fall into the wrong hands, their future cannot be guaranteed."

This is why the parents should maintain a warm and loving relationship with their children and they should strive to create an atmosphere in which the child feels remarkably safe. Whilst discussing the cons of needless severity upon children, a social worker says: "Children are bound to be mischievous but it is awfully incorrect of the parents to beat the child for his mischievousness. Our beating him up actually humiliates him and his sense of self-esteem is injured." He further adds: "Children who are repeatedly subjected to corporal punishment tend to become exceptionally audacious with time. There are a number of other methods of disciplining them." The social worker says: "If my child is guilty of misconduct I caution him 'If you don't listen to me I won't buy ice cream for you today' or 'I won't take you to Clifton Beach today' etc. My parents never raised their hands on me but they certainly reproached me a number of times. Taking my own experience into account, where my parents have subjected me to unjustifiable reproach, I try not to put my children through the same dilemma that I faced with my parents."

In short, if the child is subjected to harsh treatment at home, he is bound to maintain the same attitude when he goes out of the home because "a person gives what he gets". In such a situation, the parent's reputation is at stake. Therefore, even if you have to rebuke the child, do it in private. Even in Islâm, it is prohibited to be unnecessarily hard on children. In this regard the 'Ulamâ have stated: "Smacking or swearing the child either by the parent or the teacher is not consistent with the pristine teachings of Islâm." *[Extracted and summarized from the daily 'Jung', Karachi]*

Bear in mind that the awe of the father over the children is essential but this awe should be within limits. Don't make him so awe-struck that he dreads coming in front of you or he is terrified of even discussing something with you or he is nervous to even seek your permission for something. Such wretched children who are terrified of their father grow up to be spineless adults. Their immune system becomes incredibly fragile. They are more prone to diseases like tension, blood pressure and depression in their youth.

Therefore, as the child grows older and he gets closer to maturity, try to reduce your awe over him. Now when he reaches puberty, employ a more friendly approach with him. If you have been deficient in his upbringing, use persuasive instead of dictatorial measures.

Hadrat 'Umar ﷺ says: "A chicken-hearted person flees even from his own parents." *[Muattâ of Imâm Muhammad, Kitâbul-Jihâd p.57]*

In other words, he is so terrified of his parents that he can't even approach them. So how will he confront others? So the parents, particularly the father, should ensure that he is not so domineering that the children grow up as cowards. Strive to make them as courageous as possible. Listen to what they have to say and give them a chance to defend themselves. Don't overwhelm your children with your awe.

Terms of Corporal Punishment

1. It is incorrect to beat a child before the age of ten. In spite of Salâh being the pillar of Islâm, Rasûlullâh ﷺ has not permitted beating the child before the age of ten if the child is negligent with his Salâh. Yes, you may keep a cane hanging in the house without actually using it. Keep it at home just to instil a bit of awe in the children.
2. If you have to carry out corporal punishment, don't mete out more than ten strokes. Imâm Bukhârî *rahmatullâhi 'alaih* reports on the authority of Hadrat Abû Hurairah ﷺ that Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "Only in *Hudûd* (penal code of Islâm) should there be more then ten lashes." *[Fathul Bârî vol.15 p.191]*
3. The cane should be moist and neither very thick nor very thin.
4. Allow for a gap in between two spells of punishment. Avoid beating the child daily and do not beat the child on the same spot repeatedly.
5. Do not beat the child on the face, head and private parts.
6. Don't ever hit when angry as punishment is meted out for purposes of discipline (and not to vent one's anger). The childminder should always be in his senses. In a state of anger, a person is beyond control.
7. When the child begs you to stop in the name of Allâh, raise your hands and withdraw right away. Hadrat Abû Sa'id ﷺ reports that Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "When one of you is beating his slave and the slave takes the name of Allâh ﷻ, lift your hand away. (In other words, discontinue beating him and leave him alone. *[Tirmidhî vol. 2 p.16 H.M. Saeed]*
8. Give a detailed explanation to the child as to why he is being beaten. Perhaps he will refrain from committing the same offence in future. Also show him an alternative and explain to him that doing so will not make him liable for punishment.

Although we have mentioned the manner of admonishing the child etc., but remember, apply love and affection instead, well before the child reaches this age. If you make him perform his Ṣalâh with love and affection from a very tender age, there would be no need to punish him at all. The easiest way to make the child scrupulous with his Ṣalâh is to ensure that you and your wife are very particular about it, from a tender age, when he witnesses his parents observing Ṣalâh he will instinctively emulate them. Also, ensure that the friends you select for him are concerned about their Ṣalâh.

'Umar Bin 'Abdul Azīz's *Raḥmatullâhi 'Alaih* Rearing of his Son

We should all bear in mind that whether we are labourers or businessmen whichever field we are involved in, if we are not particular about Ḥalâl earnings, the Ḥarâm that we feed to our children would certainly leave an awful impression on the child.

If you are a trader, conduct your business in conformity with the divine laws of Allâh ﷻ, refrain from falsehood, perform your Ṣalâh with Jamâ'at in the Musjid, pay your debts the moment you obtain some funds, provide the destitute, widows and orphans with goods at highly-discounted prices, spend your earnings in the correct avenues, pay your Zakât dues to the eligible parties on time and spend your money on other eligible people as mentioned in Sûrah Baqarah. (For more details refer to the kitâb *Tafsīr-e-Waṣiyyat* compiled by the [illegible])

Similarly, if you are an employee or labourer, ensure that you are punctual, do not be negligent about your responsibilities, be very scrupulous about your duty hours and do not fall foul of your obligations to your employer.

[illegible] Muslim father should take into account the [illegible]mentioned regulations especially if he wants his son to become a leader, a practical 'Âlim, Dâ'î and Mujâhid.

[illegible] in mind the following incident during the course of rearing your child. This will provide you with some [illegible] of the lengths our predecessors went to in rearing [illegible] children correctly. They were extremely cautious as far [illegible] consuming and feeding Ḥarâm food. May Allâh ﷻ make [illegible] the value of Ḥalâl nourishment and may he [illegible] the ability to refrain from consuming and feeding [illegible] Âmîn.

[illegible] fruit of the *Baitul Mâl* (public treasury) was [illegible] before Hadrat 'Umar bin 'Abdul 'Azīz [illegible]. Whilst distributing apples, his young son [illegible] his hand and took one of the apples and started [illegible] it. Amirul-Muminin Hadrat 'Umar *raḥmatullâhi* [illegible], overwhelmed with anger, pushed him so roughly that [illegible] fell out of his mouth injuring him in the process. [illegible] came weeping to his mother. She purchased an [illegible] from the market and made it over to him. When [illegible] 'Umar *raḥmatullâhi 'alaih* came home and saw the [illegible] in the child's hand, he asked: "Where did this come from? I hope it is not from the Baitul Mâl!" His wife [illegible]: "You have injured my son's face just for a trifling [illegible]" He responded: "What you say is true but I couldn't [illegible] his action. I didn't consider it appropriate to deprive [illegible] from the enormous reward of justice just for an apple [illegible] delete my name from the files of the virtuous. [illegible] 440)

[illegible] over this judicious response. In spite of his wife's [illegible] of anger, ponder over the tact and wisdom he employed in explaining the matter to her. He didn't start [illegible] with her over the upbringing of the child neither did he brutalise his wife out of compassion for his son. Remember, in order to rear the child correctly, you will have to gain the confidence of the mother. Instead of quarrelling,

clashing, debating, wrangling and being at each other's throats all the time, employ tact, wisdom, diplomacy, love and tolerance when dealing with her. You may have to bear her bitter nastiness, you may have to explain to her in privacy, you may have to get up at night and make lots of Du'ās and sometimes you may even have to stomach a multitude of her idiosyncrasies.

Be Optimistic of the Children's Improvement

Children are a wonderful *Ni'mat* (blessing) of Allāh ﷻ. Children are naturally restless and fidgety. Due to this inherent deficiency they tend to be mischievous. Sometimes their mischievousness is really irritating and even the most tolerant of fathers may suffer from frayed nerves with the naughtiness of his children. He then makes more noise than the children. Don't make such a mistake. Think about the time when you were their age when you were just as mischievous.

Nonetheless, sometimes their mischievousness tends to devolve into unacceptable conduct. In such a case, explain very affectionately to the child that his behaviour is unacceptable and that he should abstain from such offensive behaviour in the future.

For instance, whilst playing, if your child uses abusive language against another child, caution him immediately: "Son! Abusive language is not acceptable. It taints the tongue and it also displeases Allāh ﷻ. We should try to please Allāh ﷻ at all times. In future make sure you don't utter such foul words."

Similarly, if the child is disposed to speaking lies or Allāh ﷻ forbid, he has a habit of stealing or quarrelling with other children, explain to him with love and compassion not once but again and again. It shouldn't be such that you advise him a few times and leave it at that under the notion that

you have fulfilled your fatherly obligations and if the child is stubborn what can you do? It is wrong of you to think in this manner and despair of any improvement. If the child has a sharp knife in his hand and the father is apprehensive about the child injuring himself, will the father tell the child a few times and leave it at that? Will he say that he cautioned the child a few times and the child refuses to take heed?

Obviously the father will make all-out effort to persuade the child to surrender the knife so as to protect the child from imminent injury. So conduct yourself in this manner in your other affairs as well. If you feel that the child is not very receptive to your advice, think of some alternative strategies. Beseech the help of Allāh ﷻ and counsel the child using other methods supplemented with descriptive examples.

Don't lose hope. Despondency is at odds with the teachings of Islām. We are the Ummatis of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Under no circumstances did he ever grow dejected of the disbelievers embracing Islām in spite of their revolting hostilities. So how can we be so sceptical of our children's improvement? The disbelievers of Tā'if rejected Islām and defied the teachings of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Not only did they defy him, but they set their malicious youth on him as well. They bombarded him with a cascade of stones leaving his whole body soaked in blood. As he emerged from the environs of Tāif, an angel appeared before him and submitted: "If you permit me, I will crush both these mountains together and pulverise those dwelling in between." What a touching reply he offered: "I hope that their progeny will be made up of people who will worship one deity without ascribing any partners unto Him." *[Sīratun Nabī by 'Allāmah Shiblī Nu'mānī vol.1 [illegible] and Ibn Hishām]*

And this is absolutely what transpired. Allāh ﷻ used these people for the service of His Dīn. This tribe embraced Islām a few years after Hijrah. One of their descendants was

Muhammad bin Qâsim *rahmatullâhi 'alaih* who was the first person to raise the banner of Islâm in Sindh.

So don't be despondent over your children's improvement. The disbelievers of Makkah, the archenemies of Rasûlullâh ﷺ who were perpetually preoccupied with the annihilation of Islâm, Allâh ﷻ transformed them into custodians of Dîn and the *Dâ'îs* of Dîn. When this is the case with the disbelievers, surely Allâh ﷻ can convert these wayward and rebellious children to the saints and *Dâ'îs* of these times. However, you have to put in a bit of effort and exercise a bit of patience. Your Du'âs of the latter part of the night will certainly come to use. It appears in a Hadîth that Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "Three peoples Du'âs are not rejected; the father's Du'â for his child, the Du'â of a traveller and the Du'â of the oppressed. *[Mishkât vol.1 p.195 Kitâbud Da'wât]*

Allâh ﷻ is our supporter and protector. The saints have said: "The most effective remedy as far as the reformation of the children is concerned is the humble Du'âs of the parents."
Do not tire in counselling your children. Take into account the following three points when counselling them:

1. Before counselling them on an important issue, perform two Rak'ats of Nafl Salâh and make Du'â: "O Allâh! I propose to advise my son. I request you to entrench it into his heart. O Allâh! You have absolute control over all hearts. Guide my son onto the right path." Ask your wife to perform two Rak'ats of Nafl Salâh and make Du'â as well.
2. Thereafter, enumerate the benefits of whatever you wish to propose to him and outline the worldly and religious harms of whatever you wish to prevent him from.
3. Whilst speaking to your child, address him in an affectionate and tender tone especially when he has already come of age. Avoid making statements like: "I have advised you a hundred times! You want me to give it to you in writing? I cautioned you in Urdu. Should I get a professor from Newtown to advise you in Arabic or

English perhaps? What do you think you are doing? What are you worth? You fit for nothing!" etc., etc. Avoid such statements that alleviate the anger of the father and instead of benefiting the child bring about more harm. May Allâh Ta'âlâ grant us all the tact to counsel our children appropriately.

The father's labours and Du'âs may only produce results after his death. The father's efforts will benefit the child either in his lifetime or after his death. So there is nothing to despair about.

Prevent the Child Developing an Inferiority Complex

Some children are exceptionally quiet and constantly scared. They lack the natural restlessness that makes other children endlessly fidgety. They are terrified of speaking to anyone and they are unable to converse appropriately even with children of their own age. This in fact is an indication that the child could be suffering from an inferiority complex. This complex normally develops when the child witnesses his seniors doing as they please; the adults rebuke him for the most trivial of things; they consider him a minor and dismiss him as a stupid. Such behaviour fuels his inferiority complex even further.

Similarly, some households tend to compare their children's physical beauty to other children. Subsequently, other children are favoured over their own. Sometimes, the child's strength or intelligence is compared to other children and as a result his weakness is laid bare to him. In other words, he is constantly reminded that so and so child is more beautiful, more intelligent and stronger than you are. This cultivates feelings of inferiority within the child and he thus regards himself as insignificant and irrelevant.

Experience confirms that the child's weak mind or frail mentality is no indication that he will always remain like

this. There are a number of such incidents before us where a child was an utter idiot but Allâh ﷻ turned him into an intelligent adult who accomplished much more that his other 'brighter' contemporaries.

So for Allâh's ﷻ sake, do not compare your child to other children. If he is physically deficient or he lacks outward beauty, it is no fault of his. Physical beauty is the endowment of Allâh ﷻ alone. He has the sole authority to make some people more attractive than others. In fact, every human being is beautiful. Allâh ﷻ declares: "We have created mankind in the most beautiful form." Hence, nobody is ugly. As a poet describes: "Nobody is unsightly in the divine assembly plant of Allâh ﷻ."

Instead of making the child feel hideously unattractive, weak, naive and stupid why don't you boost his spirits!? Narrate to him incidents of individuals who scaled great heights in spite of the ominous odds stacked against them. For instance, *Maqâmât* is an unrivalled book on Arabic literature. History bears testimony to its author that he was repulsively ugly but his academic feat more than compensated for his physical deficiency. This academic accomplishment disguised his physical deficiency more than enough and up to this day, his name holds great honour in literacy circles around the world. The famous scholar, minister and author of Egypt, Tahâ Yâsin was blind. The eminent Muftî of Saudi Arabia Shaikh 'Abdullâh bin Bâz was also blind. The well-known inventor of the light bulb, Edison was deaf.

There are a number of such incidents where physically incompetent or hideous looking or gullible people attained such degrees of academic excellence that even ordinary healthy people lagged behind.

Similarly, one of the contributors to this feeling of inferiority complex is that parents sometimes tend to go overboard

when assisting their children with their work. They don't allow their children complete freedom to carry out their work unhindered. Progressively the child believes that he is unable to do any work on his own. When he eventually places his foot in the field of physical action, he lacks the courage to stand on his own. Then he is always at the mercy of others. Therefore, allow your children to do things on their own as well. Yes, you should supervise them but as far as possible don't meddle in their work. Also encourage them to do their own work. This will develop self-confidence, which will eventually keep feelings of inferiority complex at bay.

Also, one of the primary reasons for the development of inferiority complex is jealousy. When the child sees someone stronger than him and in spite of trying, he is unable to reveal the same strength, he tends to become jealous of the other person. This ultimately cultivates the malady of inferiority complex. Similarly, the child tends to become jealous when he observes someone more intelligent or richer or better than him. This jealousy sows the seeds for a complex of inferiority.

So try and prevent the child from jealousy. Relate to him and make him memorise the verses of the Holy Qur'ân and Ahâdîth that condemn jealousy. Also impart to him the significance of patience. An important point we wish to present here is that try to change the cause of the jealousy. For instance, you may explain to the child: "Son, in the fields you know you can win, you should most certainly take part. Your classmate memorises a whole Ruk'û without getting stuck. You strive to learn one and half Ruk'ûs. Your classmate excels in class with full marks. You can also do it. Your friend doesn't get hiding at all. Why don't you work so hard and behave so well that the teacher finds no need to even admonish you.

If you implement the aforementioned principles, it is hoped that the child will be spared from developing an inferiority complex, Inshā Allāh.

Avoid Victimising any of the Children

Generally when there are four or five children under one roof, the youngest child tends to become an object of ridicule. All his seniors are always after his blood as though this child will never grow up. The repercussions of this are very severe indeed. Not only will the household or the neighbourhood be affected but society at large is bound to suffer its consequences. The family unit forms part of society. So anything that influences the family unit will ultimately impact on society as well.

Some of the problems of victimisation are:

1. A child who is constantly assailed with criticism tends to lose his intellectual capabilities.
2. Such children generally fall prey to an inferiority complex.
3. Despondency prevails over them.
4. They are terrified of taking part in any group action.
5. They are unable to achieve in spite of their abilities. They hold all their seniors responsible for the period in which they fell prey to discrimination and victimisation.

Apart from this, when these children see their wishes stifled, their feelings trampled upon, when there is nobody to turn to, when they are unable to express their emotions and feelings, such children fall prey to decadent attitudes right from their very childhood days. Feelings of inferiority tend to take root within them. Their abilities, which should have been used positively, are now focused upon the negative. They are prone to join bad company, which ultimately fuels their negative perceptions. Such company will certainly comprise of such poor souls who are ready to lend their ears to this child because, after all, all of them have fallen victim

to similar fates. The friends he makes within this society will escort him to the brink of destruction.

Allāh ﷻ forbid, sometimes such children even resort to drugs and other intoxicants. The elusive tranquillity they failed to obtain within the home environment is now sought through the medium of drugs. They are wholly oblivious of the fact that the cloud of drug-saturated smoke they ingest may bring about fleeting tranquillity but this cloud will surely not rain with droplets of life but with fumes of lethal poison.

Every Muslim father should maintain equality amongst all his children. He should display equal affection to all of them. He should be cautious not to offend anyone by praising one child whilst condemning the other. Don't go on praising one and calling the other a stupid or indolent dunce. If one of the children has a problem, advise him with love and affection. Share your flowers of love with rigid impartiality. This will encourage sentiments of mutual assistance and increase their love for one another.

A child is very sensitive to his self-esteem. When his self-esteem is wounded or he is put to shame, the consequences are certainly very severe.

Also, it shouldn't be such that you make one child do all the work around the house and make the other child sit and talk to you or you don't make him work at all because he is stupid and inefficient. Don't ever do this. Children are ultra-sensitive by nature. They become offended very quickly.

One of the solutions is, for instance, you are sitting down to eat with all the children and the phone rings. Avoid commanding one of them to attend to it. Avoid saying, "Zainab! You answer the phone". If you want water, avoid saying "Ayūb! Fetch some water". Etc. Avoid singling out any one of them as they are all busy enjoying their chitchat or they are absorbed in some interesting story or they are

eating with relish etc., etc. So to single out the eldest daughter or to disturb the youngest child all the time is inappropriate. In such a case, make a general request. "Who will bring me some water first? Mâshâ Allâh! Very good! Who will answer the phone first? Mâshâ Allâh! Ayûb! Well done! You have carried out a number of tasks today. Listen children! Whoever exerts himself, serves others and assists his parents and siblings will remain healthy. He will become more adept at the task and everyone will give him Du'âs." etc., etc.

Therefore, don't allow your sentiments to dictate so and so child is intelligent whilst so and so is lazy or stupid etc. All the children are equal before you. Treat all of them with impartiality. Don't ever verbally express your disgust by calling them names like stupid, indolent, negligent etc. Remember, such outbursts may calm the fury of the father but it is no remedy for the stupidity of the child. Employ diplomacy, tact and patience, strive to turn the indolent child into a productive child. Try and turn the foolish child into a wise lad in such a manner that he gets the impression that he is also intelligent in the eyes of his father. Dad also regards me as industrious and intelligent but he is advising me just to enhance my abilities. Remember! This is a very sensitive issue. If the father controls his anger and rears his children correctly, this world will also turn out to be paradise for him.

If the elder brothers relentlessly rebukes or humiliates the younger brother, it would most certainly cultivate hypocrisy within the hearts. The same resentment and anxiety will ultimately lead to animosity as they grow older. So since Allâh ﷻ has blessed you with fatherhood, why don't you attend to your children's problems and affairs yourself? If your eldest son has the ability, you may delegate the responsibility to him. However, what normally happens is that when the youngest child has four brothers and three sisters, all of them team up against him and act like the

father. They order the child around like they are his fathers. Now think for yourself, when there is just one real father and there are seven other people bossing him about, you can very well imagine what his condition will be like. So if the younger child complains about his elder siblings, in front of them, advise him to respect his elder brothers and sisters. Thereafter, take the elder children aside and warn them that you, the father, is still alive. Caution them: "None of you should admonish or boss him about. If he does something wrong, advise him. If he fails to take heed, make Du'â for his Hidâyat. If he repeats the offence, advise him again. If he persists, inform me in confidence and I will deal with him. But don't ever raise your hand over him or reproach him. In this manner, the rights of the elder brother are upheld, the younger brother's problem will be resolved and the youngsters will maintain their respect for the seniors.

Reprimanding the Child over a Misdemeanour

Every Muslim father should employ the brilliant techniques of child rearing as employed by our beloved Rasûlullâh ﷺ in reforming the lives of the Sahâbah ؓ. Wisdom and tact was always a priority in Rasûlullâh's ﷺ reformative techniques. He was never one to utter such phrases or conduct himself in a manner that created the wrong impression on the addressee. Neither did he conduct himself in a manner that absolutely agitated the addressee nor did he advise him in a way that led him to immorality.

Whenever Rasûlullâh ﷺ learnt about someone committing an offence, he always ensured that he counselled the perpetrator in a manner that was neither offensive nor tactless. He always waited for the appropriate moment to caution him. Instead of admonishing the perpetrator individually, he would often address the people in general and within his address he would make reference to the offence. The offender would realize his folly and abandon

whatever he was doing. He wouldn't even perceive that he is specifically being singled out. In other words, Rasûlullâh ﷺ employed a more collective approach instead of bluntly admonishing the person directly.

Once Rasûlullâh ﷺ learnt that some people considered his 'Ibâdât (devotions) to be very limited and they subsequently went overboard. One of them vowed to refrain from meat. Another person promised to abstain from marriage whilst the third person undertook to stay away from his bed. When Rasûlullâh ﷺ heard of their folly, instead of addressing them directly, he addressed the Sahâbah ﷺ collectively: "What is the problem with some people? What makes them express such things? I also perform Salâh. I also sleep. I fast and I also abstain from fasting. I also marry. Whomsoever scorns my Sunnah is not of me. *[Sahîh Muslim vol.1 p.449]*

When Rasûlullâh ﷺ discovered the fanatical behaviour and over-zealous determination of this group, he addressed all the Sahâbah ﷺ collectively to try and eradicate this train of thought. This also benefited the people in general in a sense that they also became aware of the proper Islâmic ideology. They were exposed to the Islâmic system of moderation as opposed to extreme fanaticism. Those guilty of extremism also realized their folly without any form of exposure and embarrassment.

So if the children commit an offence, the father should admonish all his children in general without singling out the guilty child. In this manner, all the children will also be cautioned. However, if the father feels it is more appropriate to admonish him individually, he may do so but in a positive manner. Whenever Rasûlullâh ﷺ felt the need to reprimand anyone directly, he would do so discreetly. He would advise with such sincere warmth and affection that not only would the addressee reform himself but also he would not fall pray to an inferiority complex.

On one occasion, when he was a child, Hadrat 'Umar bin Abu Salmah ﷺ was eating with Rasûlullâh ﷺ. His hand was busy moving about in the plate. Since nobody else was present and it was appropriate to reprimand him instantaneously, Rasûlullâh ﷺ cautioned him promptly but in a very loving and encouraging manner. Not only did he reprimand him on his errant behaviour but he mentioned a fundamental etiquette of eating in such a loving manner that Hadrat 'Umar bin Abu Salmah ﷺ didn't even realize that he was being reprimanded. He was under the impression that Rasûlullâh ﷺ is explaining to him the etiquette of eating. This is why Rasûlullâh ﷺ first explained to him some other etiquette and then eventually advised him: "Eat from the side of the plate that is nearest to you." Rasûlullâh ﷺ counselled him: "Boy! Recite Bismillâh. Eat with your right hand and eat from the side nearest to you."
[Sahîh Bukhârî / Sahîh Muslim vol.1 p.172]

Look at what a loving tone Rasûlullâh ﷺ adopts at the beginning of his advice; before progressing to the actual error, he draws his attention to other advices in a manner that the admonishment at the end also seems like an advice.

Occasionally, physical restraint is called for. Sometimes Rasûlullâh ﷺ would not utter anything with the tongue but he would physically restrain the person in such a manner that the person himself would realize his folly. Sometimes, a physical approach is more effective than verbal communication.

Once Hadrat Fadl ﷺ was seated behind Rasûlullâh ﷺ on a conveyance when a woman approached him. Hadrat Fadl ﷺ couldn't help but stare at her. She in turn returned his intent gazes. Rasûlullâh ﷺ physically turned Hadrat Fadl's ﷺ face away from her. *[Sahîh Bukhârî vol.1 p.205]*

At this juncture, it would have been unwise and tactless to verbally advise him. How to deal with the situation verbally?

Who do you address from the two? How do you address them? Even if he prudently conveyed a verbal warning to him, there was a fear of denting his self-esteem. So he very prudently and wisely placed his hand over Hadrat Fadl's ﷺ head and turned his attention away from the woman. Hadrat Fadl ﷺ realized his wrongdoing and this wise approach would have obviously left a very promising impression on his mind.

When reprimanding the child, always reprimand him within the limits of his error. However, if this error has a positive side to it, encourage him to take advantage of it. Promotion of this positive angle would prove favourable in eradicating his problem. In other words, his conscience will bother him in the future and a repeat of his error will be difficult. Even Rasûlullâh ﷺ adopted this stance. If there was a positive side to the error, he would first exploit its positive side and then he would warn the perpetrator against the actual sin.

A Sahâbî ﷺ once entered the Musjid when the Jamât was already in Rukû'. For fear of missing the Rak'at, he said the Takbîr and joined in the Jamât whilst he was still at the door. He then walked gradually and joined the Jamât. After the Salâh, when Rasûlullâh ﷺ was informed of this action, he commented: "May Allâh ﷻ increased your craving (for Dîn) but don't do this in the future." *[Muattâ of Imâm Muhammad p.154]*

In other words: "May Allâh ﷻ enhance your yearning for Dîn. The fact that you joined the Jamât the moment you came into the Musjid is an indication of your passionate yearning for Dîn. May Allâh ﷻ increase this passion. However, in future, don't do this. When you come into the Musjid, enter in a dignified manner and join the Jamât with ease."

Ponder over this; if a young boy comes into the Musjid today and starts his Salâh at the door and heads straight for

the Jamât, how will he be berated and condemned? "You beast! Don't you have that much of sense? How can you walk in Salâh? Aren't you ashamed of yourself?" etc. etc.

Whereas here we have an adult who did the same, but look at how affectionately Rasûlullâh ﷺ advises him. We parents, the fathers and teachers in particular should make a firm commitment that we will also counsel our children and juniors with such love and affection. This advice will also become part of Dîn, Inshâ Allâh. Our affectionate guidance will be a source of reward in this world as well as the next. It will also be a source of acquiring the pleasure of Allâh ﷻ and a means of improving the lot of the children.

It is narrated in Sahîh Muslim that Hadrat Mu'âwiyah bin Hakm Aslamî ﷺ relates: "I was once performing Salâh with Rasûlullâh ﷺ when a person sneezed and I responded with 'Yarhamukallâh'. People around me started casting glowering stares in my direction. When I asked why they are staring at me like this, they started beating their thighs in Salâh as in indication to remain silent whilst the Salâh is in progress. I subsequently fell silent.

After the Salâh, Rasûlullâh ﷺ summoned me and (with such affection) he advised me that may my parents be sacrificed for him. I haven't come across any teacher better than Rasûlullâh ﷺ, neither before him nor after him. By Allâh! Rasûlullâh ﷺ neither rebuked me nor beat me. Instead he advised me: "This Salâh is such that any form of speech therein is not appropriate. The Salâh consists of Tasbîh, Takbîr and the recitation of the Qur'ân." *[Sahîh Muslim vol.1 p.203]*

So, every Muslim father should endeavour to assume these counselling techniques of Rasûlullâh ﷺ. Every single Sunnah of Rasûlullâh ﷺ is a guiding light. All forms of success are one hundred percent subjected to his code of life. We should strive to revive his Sunnahs dealing with his social life and inter-related dealings within our own society and strive to

revive the social life of Rasûlullâh ﷺ within all the peoples of the world. Âmîn.

In order to revive this Sunnah, parents, teachers and others in charge should take heed of two points. Consideration of these two points will, Inshâ Allâh, enable one to practically implement the Sunnah as far as restraining the anger, advising with wisdom, rectifying the problem, maintaining love and affection and other factors are concerned. The two points are:

1. Avoid reprimanding the child the instant he commits the error. Never catch him "red-handed". To sneak up to him whilst he is committing the error and then to beat, reprimand or express outrage is inappropriate.
2. Avoid warning or punishing the child the moment you discover his error or the moment you hear of a complaint lodged against him. Wait for a duration of three Salâhs. After the passing of three Salâhs, summon the child and then enquire what transpired. Ask him: "What's the problem, son? So and so teacher or so and so uncle complained about your behaviour today."

If the complaint reaches you at 'Asr time, wait at least until the next Fajr time and then question him. Implementation of this advice will, Inshâ Allâh, bring about tranquillity in the heart and mind. You will be safeguarded from deadly illnesses like depression and tension etc.

Stop here and recite Durûd Sharîf ten times and with utmost humility beg Allâh ﷻ to grant you the proper method of counselling your children. May He grant you the ability to exploit the positive angle of every problem. Âmîn.

There is an incident of a smart father who cautioned his son to abstain from riding his bicycle on the road. In spite of repeated warnings the son failed to take heed. The father subsequently chained the bicycle, secured it with a lock and

went to work. The son managed to open the lock with a screwdriver and before the father could return home in the evening, he replaced it in such a manner that the father would not catch on. When the father learnt of the son's action, he called him and congratulated him. "When you grow up," he said. "You will, Inshâ Allâh, become a great scientist. You will serve the country and the nation. Millions of people will benefit from you. Allâh ﷻ has gifted you with such a remarkable talent that you managed opening the lock, used the bicycle for the day and re-parked it without me realizing it was tampered with. Son! You have displayed extraordinary talent."

The next morning the father summoned the boy again and said: "Son! What you did yesterday was a remarkable feat but viewed from another angle it can also be called theft. Allâh ﷻ has blessed you with such an incredible mind. Instead of using it for theft, why don't you use it for a better purpose? I prevented you from riding the bicycle on the road for your own benefit; so that you don't get hurt. I would have unlocked the cycle in the evening. Anyway, don't repeat this in the future."

Comprehensive Speech

During the course of *Tarbiyat* (discipline), one of the prudent techniques Rasûlullâh ﷺ employed was that he refrained from lengthy, winding and boring advice. He would strive to make his point with as few words as possible. This enabled the addressee to grasp the point and also enabled one to memorise the words of advice. There are a number of such sentences in the Ahâdîth which, although brief, their connotation goes beyond oceanic depths. Such phrases are referred to as *'Jawâmi-'ul-Kalim'* (comprehensive speech).

We will mention a few phrases of *'Jawâmi-'ul-Kalim'* to enable you to express yourself better.

- Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "The best affairs are those in which there is firm resolve. The worst form of blindness is the blindness of the heart."
- Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "The best knowledge is that which is beneficial."
- Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "The upper hand is superior to the lower hand." *[Sahîh Bukhârî, Kitâbuz-Zakât]*
- Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "The most unpleasant form of remorse will be the remorse suffered on the day of judgement."
- Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "That which is little but sufficient is better than that which is a lot but distractive. *[Abû Nu'aim in Hulyah from Abu Dardâ ﷺ p.226]*
- Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "The most superior way of life is the life of the Ambiyâ ﷺ. The best form of wealth is the wealth of the heart."
- Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "Everything that (is destined) to come is close."
- Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "Youth is an element of insanity." *[Baihaqi]*

These are some of the *'Jawâmi-'ul-Kalim'*. In a few words, Rasûlullâh ﷺ expressed immeasurable connotations. His advice and guidance was always short and sweet. It appears in the Ahâdîth that whenever Rasûlullâh ﷺ delivered a sermon, he was neither deficient nor tediously lengthy. *[Abû Dâwûd]*

Badgering the child with a constant stream of advice may lead to boredom or even rebelliousness. Therefore, advise the child to the extent he can stomach. To reprimand or advise the child daily or incessantly may be more detrimental than beneficial.

Counselling Techniques

Every father should listen attentively to the questions posed by his children and respond with a satisfactory answer. Any expression of disgust or rebuke is inappropriate or else they would, out of fear, leave out questioning altogether. They

would be deprived of useful and essential knowledge and the father will be held responsible for this deprivation. So make sure you listen carefully and reply satisfactorily. If you feel the child will not understand verbally, provide him with a practical demonstration provided it is within the Shar'î limitations.

Rasûlullâh ﷺ also made use of practical demonstration when he felt that a verbal explanation wouldn't be as effective or when the questioner wouldn't be at ease.

Once Rasûlullâh ﷺ led the Salâh whilst he was on the pulpit. This enabled the Sahâbah ﷺ to clearly witness and emulate his manner of performing Salâh. This is why, after the Salâh he said: "O People! I did this so that you can emulate me and teach others the method of my Salâh." *[Mishkât vol.1 p.99]*

Abû Dâwûd *rahmatullâhi 'alaih* and Nasaî *rahmatullâhi 'alaih* report that Hadrat 'Alî ﷺ narrated: "Rasûlullâh ﷺ took hold of silk in his right hand and gold in his left hand and remarked: 'These two items are Harâm for the males of my Ummah." *[Abû Dâwûd vol.2 p.205]*

In order to physically demonstrate the prohibition of silk and gold, Rasûlullâh ﷺ raised them in his hands. This enabled the prohibition to become more evident and it also entrenched the magnitude of abstaining from these things within the hearts of the people.

On the authority of 'Amr bin Shu'aib ﷺ, Abû Dâwûd *rahmatullâhi 'alaih* and Ibn Mâjah *rahmatullâhi 'alaih* narrate that a person once appeared before Rasûlullâh ﷺ and submitted: "O Rasûl of Allâh ﷺ! How should the Wudû be performed?"

If Rasûlullâh ﷺ verbally explained to him the method of Wudû, his answer would have been complete but he requested for a container of water and physically demonstrated the method of performing Wudû so that the

questioner may physically observe the actual Wudû and there is no fear of him inserting or omitting anything. After completing the Wudû, Rasûlullâh ﷺ commented: "A person who adds on or omits any part of this Wudû is guilty of violating the law and he has committed an injustice." *[Abû Dâwûd vol.1 p.18]*

Similarly, in order to demonstrate the importance of a point, express it with force so that its significance is embedded within the children's hearts and they entertain the point with enthusiasm. This is why, whenever prudence warranted, Rasûlullâh ﷺ would occasionally employ a vigorous tone. Sometimes he would express the importance of a point by swearing an oath. When he wanted to attach more importance to the point, he would repeatedly swear an oath. For instance, Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "By Allâh! He is not a believer! By Allâh! He is not a believer! By Allâh! He is not a believer!" "Who?" he was asked, "is not a believer." Rasûlullâh ﷺ replied: "He whose neighbour is not safe from his evil." *[Sahîh Bukhârî vol.2 p.889]*

If he felt the need and the circumstances warranted, Rasûlullâh ﷺ would address the Sahâbah ﷺ in a very emotionally moving manner. Hadrat 'Irbâd bin Sâriyah ﷺ narrates that Rasûlullâh ﷺ once delivered a sermon that left our bodies aflame with ardour, the eyes gushed forth and the hearts were left trembling. *[Tirmidhî in Abwâbul 'Ilm vol.2 p.96]*

Hadrat 'Abdullâh bin 'Umar ﷺ narrates that once Rasûlullâh ﷺ delivered such a passionate speech that the pulpit started shuddering to such an extent that we thought the pulpit is going to topple over." *[Sahîh Muslim, Ibn Mâjah-Bâbu Zikril-Ba'th p.326]*

This fervour and passion will only come about when you have exceptional love for your children, when you are concerned about their welfare, when you are anxious about their spiritual well being and when you cherish profound sentiments of sincerity.

Whatever technique Rasûlullâh ﷺ employed in the education and spiritual rearing of the Sahâbah it always had an angle of wisdom to it. So you should also rear your children as prudently as Rasûlullâh ﷺ spiritually reared the Sahâbah ﷺ. Together with this, make Du'â: "O Allâh! Bless me with the best techniques of child-rearing through which we may be successful in this world as well as the next. May these children be a source of disseminating the illustrious lifestyle of your beloved Rasûl ﷺ and May your Dîn dominate over all other religions. Âmîn.

Management of Emotions and Sentiments

Lending constructive direction to a person's emotions and perceptions is another name for *Tarbiyat* (upbringing). The father should take into account the emotions and perceptions of the child and funnel them in the right direction. He should not struggle to suppress their emotions nor should he do anything that would stimulate their emotions and lead them to disobey or loathe the father. If he is unable to solve the problem presently, he might as well remain silent and try to solve the issue after consulting others. You will appreciate how productive it is to channel their emotions in the right direction.

Rasûlullâh ﷺ always kept the temperament and psychology of his addressees into account. He wouldn't allow their emotions to swing in the wrong direction. If their emotions were frosty and indifferent, he would attempt to bring about some warmth within them. If their emotions were inflamed with fervour, he would refrain from saying or doing anything that would allow their emotions to go beyond control. He would take into account their emotions and feelings and channel them into a more constructive direction. Instead of attempting to stem the flood of emotions, Rasûlullâh ﷺ would essentially try to channel them in the right direction. We will mention a few incidents from which you will

appropriately gauge the advantages of channelling the emotions in the right direction.

After the battle of Hunain, Rasûlullâh ﷺ distributed the war booty amongst the various Arab tribes mainly to draw their hearts towards Islâm. The Ansâr were not favoured with any part of the booty during this expedition whilst all the other tribes received a share. When the Ansâr realised this, it was only human for (some of) them to harbour suspicion and distrust. All sorts of speculative rumours started flying about. They alleged: "In times of need, we were summoned to help but when the time comes for the distribution of wealth, Rasûlullâh ﷺ disregarded us in favour of his own people. When Hadrat S'ad bin 'Ubâdah ؓ, one of the most distinguished individuals of the Ansâr, heard of these assertions, he came to Rasûlullâh ﷺ and submitted:

"O Rasûl of Allâh ﷺ! The Ansâr are offended because you distributed all the booty amongst your own clan. You favoured the other Arab clans with enormous gifts whilst the Ansâr returned with practically nothing."

Rasûlullâh ﷺ responded: "S'ad bin 'Ubâdah! What is your view on this issue?" He replied: "O Rasûl of Allâh! After, all, I am also a member of the Ansâr." Rasûlullâh ﷺ then asked Hadrat S'ad ؓ to gather all the Ansâr in a certain area as he wished to address them personally. When the Ansâries assembled, Rasûlullâh ﷺ appeared before them. After saying *Hamd* and *Thanâ* (praises of Allâh ﷻ), Rasûlullâh ﷺ said:

"O People of Ansâr! What are these rumours circulating? What do you find offensive? When I came to you, were you not astray? Didn't Allâh ﷻ guide you through me? Were you not poor and Allâh ﷻ granted you riches through me? Were you not sworn enemies unto one another? Didn't Allâh ﷻ bring your hearts together?"

The Ansâr responded: "Yes, surely Allâh ﷻ and His Rasûl ﷺ have been infinitely kind and benevolent to us." Upon this Rasûlullâh ﷺ remarked: "O Ansâries! Why are you silent?

Why don't you respond to my questions?" The Ansâr replied: O Rasûl of Allâh! What can we say? All this is the favour and bounty of Allâh ﷻ and His Rasûl ﷺ alone."

Rasûlullâh ﷺ then said: "O People of Ansâr! By Allâh! You could claim, and you will be truthful in your claims and I will attest to your claims. You could claim: "O Muhammad! You came to us when you were declared a liar but we believed in you. You came to us unsupported and we assisted you. The others deserted you and we provided you with a place of safety. You came as a pauper to us and we sympathised with you."

"O People of Ansâr! You are upset over a trifling thing of the *dunyâ* which I distributed to others to draw them towards Islâm whilst I had consigned you to your Islâm."

"O People of Ansâr! Are you not pleased with the fact that whilst the others return with goats and camels, you return home with Allâh ﷻ and His Rasûl ﷺ? By Allâh in whose control lies my soul, what you are returning with is infinitely more superior to that they are returning with. If it wasn't for Hijrah (migration from Makkah to Madînah), I would have been from amongst the Ansâr. If the people tread on mountain pass or valley, I would choose the pass or valley chosen by the Ansâr.

"The closest to me are the Ansâr and then the others follow suit. O Allâh! Shower your mercy upon the Ansâr, their children and their grandchildren." *[Zâdul Ma'âd]*

The narrator relates: "Upon listening to this sermon, the Ansâr wept so bitterly that their beards were drenched with tears and they submitted: "We are pleased with the distribution of Allâh and His Rasûl ﷺ." *[Zâdul-Ma'âd vol.3 p.409-410]*

Think about it; what a fragile direction their emotions were taking. If Rasûlullâh's ﷺ sermon conflicted with their emotions or he failed to grasp the bearing of their emotions, you can very well imagine consequences of his austerity. When Rasûlullâh ﷺ heard of the anxious sentiments of the Anṣâr from Hadrat S'ad bin 'Ubâdah ؓ, he didn't get furious about it. He didn't utter anything that would have further catastrophically enraged the emotions of Hadrat S'ad ؓ and the other Anṣâr. Rasûlullâh ﷺ fully realized the severity of their emotions. He realised that a sudden outburst of emotions is inherently natural and it is a fleeting phase that needs to be channelled in the right direction. This is why he chose to speak directly to the Anṣâr.

When the Anṣâr assembled, Rasûlullâh ﷺ initially attempted to cast their emotions in the right direction by reminding them of their past. He struck a chord in recalling what great favours Allâh ﷻ and His Rasûl bestowed on them ﷺ. This reminder temporarily calmed the emotions of the Anṣâr but one question still needed to be dealt with. Although the Anṣâr were silenced by Rasûlullâh's ﷺ sermon but a nagging question may still creep into their minds. They could have reflected that although Rasûlullâh ﷺ was responsible for their spiritual guidance, they, the Anṣâr, reciprocated by providing him with succour and refuge when his own people banished him from his birthplace. Hence, Rasûlullâh ﷺ attended to these reservations in such a manner that whilst verbally expressing their predictable sentiments, he dispelled all their misgivings. He thereafter conveyed his profound attachment to the Anṣâr and this not only cleared any misgivings they entertained but increased the love they had for Rasûlullâh ﷺ.

Similarly, as you are well aware that the truce of Hudaibiyyah that was sanctioned by the commandment of Allâh ﷻ was apparently a truce acceded to under great pressure from the disbelievers. This can be gauged from one of the conditions of the truce that read as follows: 'if a

resident of Makkah accepts Islâm and flees to Madînah, the Muslims would repatriate him back to Makkah but if a Muslim of Madînah flees to Makkah, the disbelievers would not be compelled to send him back to Madînah. There were a number of other such bewildering conditions. Whilst the conditions were not even fully finalised and the terms of the truce were not even put to paper when a Sahâbî, Hadrat Abû Jandal ؓ, turned up in shackles and threw himself before the Muslims. He entreated: "Since I have accepted Islâm, the Makkans have been persecuting me. I have just managed to flee from them and here I am." The representatives of the Quraish (disbelievers) demanded that the truce would only be ratified if Abû Jandal ؓ is made over to them. Rasûlullâh ﷺ responded: "The terms of the truce is not even written down as yet." The Quraish replied: "If he is not made over to us, we will refuse to undertake any further peace talks with you in the future."

Just to wrap up the peace treaty (which enshrouded a number of advantages), Rasûlullâh ﷺ handed Hadrat Abû Jandal ؓ over to the disbelievers. Shackled in chains, Hadrat Abû Jundul ؓ pleaded with the Muslims: "O Muslims! I am being returned to the polytheists in your presence. Don't you see my pitiful condition? Can't you see how much I have been persecuted in the path of Allâh ﷻ?" *[Sahîh Bukhârî vol.1 p.380]*

You can very well imagine the intensity of the emotions of the Sahâbah ؓ on this occasion, particularly the emotions of the younger Sahâbah ؓ. You can gauge the emotions of the Sahâbah ؓ from the reaction of Hadrat 'Umar ؓ to this treaty. Hadrat 'Umar ؓ went to Rasûlullâh ﷺ and Hadrat Abû Bakr ؓ and lamented: "Why are we cowering under the terms of this treaty? Isn't Rasûlullâh ﷺ the true messenger of a true Dîn? Isn't our Dîn the true Dîn? Are the *Kuffâr* (disbelievers) not treading the pathways of deviation and falsehood?"

In such a state of affairs, Rasûlullâh ﷺ accepts the terms of the treaty. Following his endorsement, Rasûlullâh ﷺ rises and addresses the Sahâbah ؓ saying: "Rise! Slaughter your animals here and shave your heads at this very spot."
The Ansâr and Muhâjirîn were left dumbfounded. They set out from Madînah with the sole purpose of visiting the K'abah after such a long time. They intended to slaughter their animals at Minâ and not outside Makkah. The Kuffâr didn't even permit them to set foot in Makkah with their arms and on the other hand, they were faced with a treaty based on irrational and inequitable terms. The Sahâbah ؓ were not under duress to agree to the terms of the treaty. Without much material wealth, they were victorious in the battles of Badr and Uhud but when Rasûlullâh ﷺ ratified the treaty they all fell silent. However, the silent oceans of emotions were about to gush forth. All the Sahâbah ؓ were lost in the oceans of bewilderment and shock. Thy failed to grasp what is happening. The intensity of their feelings could be determined from the fact that the Sahâbah ؓ who were prepared to sacrifice their lives at the slightest indication from Rasûlullâh ﷺ are now sitting dumbfounded following this commandment of Rasûlullâh ﷺ.

Rasûlullâh ﷺ intermittently reiterated his commandment. He asked the Sahâbah ؓ three times to slaughter their animals and shave their heads but not one of them moved. They were as though they lost their senses.

Rasûlullâh ﷺ very well understood the intensity of their emotions and chose to remain silent. He realised that any harsh words of rebuke at this point in time would perhaps lead to something more unpleasant. No solution came to mind. So he went into his *harem* and conferred with Hadrat Ummu Salmah *radiallâhû 'anhâ*. Following her advice, he settled on a course of action and went out. Without saying anything, Rasûlullâh ﷺ slaughtered his animal and summoned his barber to shave his head. On witnessing this, the Sahâbah ؓ also got underway in slaughtering their

animals and shaving each other's heads. Some of them were so overwhelmed with grief and frustration that they injured one another whilst shaving. *[Sahîh Bukhârî vol.1 p.377]*

Look at how Rasûlullâh ﷺ contained the raging flood of emotions. Every teacher and father should ponder over this and endeavour to put it into practice. May Allâh ﷻ grant us the divine ability to rear and discipline our children in this favourable manner. Âmîn.

Do Not Impair the Child's Faculty of Judgement

The faculty of judgement is a great boon indeed. When a man is endowed with the knack of accurate judgement when confronted with the most complex issues without being perturbed with the ups and downs of life and together with Mashwarah, he holds firm onto the trust and persistently upholds the truth - then this is an admirable blessing indeed. There is no doubt that this is a divine and Allah-inspired bounty.

In respect of Hadrat Dâwûd ؑ, Allah ﷻ mentions in the Holy Qur'ân:

"And We had bestowed upon him (Dâwûd ؑ) wisdom (i.e. prophethood) and sound judgement in speech." *[Surah Sâd verse20]*

In the commentary of this verse, some *Mufassirîn* are of the opinion that it is a reference to the 'faculty of judgment'. In other words, Allah ﷻ had bestowed him with the divine ability to resolve disputes and feuds. He was exceptionally proficient at resolving such issues and he was a man of decisive speech.

Think about it! What a marvellous bounty! It has to be since Allah ﷻ mentions it together with the other divine bounties. Therefore, earnestly implore Allah ﷻ to grant your children this bounty. At the same time, take all necessary

precautions to refrain from those things that would efface this ability.

Some of the things adversely affecting this faculty are; non-stop criticism of the children, humiliating them by hurling abusive words at them, taunting them by comparing them with other children, to refrain from encouraging or praising them when they do well, to abstain from making Du'â for them, etc.

Remember that the child's faculty of judgement would assist him in splendid feats of accomplishment when he grows into an adult. Any form of deficiency in this faculty is bound to practically affect his future performance. When the child becomes a bit responsive and discerning, make him carry out a few basic household chores, make him do the basic grocery shopping at the market or the local store. Where such a course of action bolsters his mental abilities and tutors him in the art of social relationships, it also leaves an indelible impression on his character and morals. Whilst the parents and other senior members of the household engage the children in some chore or the other, they should also reflect over the fact that this is also a technique of moulding the child psychologically. This technique burnishes the child's inconspicuous mental abilities. So, for a few pennies, don't ruin this faculty of judgement and do not break his heart. For instance, you sent the child to purchase a packet of cumin-seed biscuits. For some reason or the other, he returns with something other than you had requested. Now, the moment you see him, without even granting him an opportunity to explain himself, you start yelling: "You stupid ass! I asked you to purchase something and look what you come with? You worthless moron! Why can't you understand? Why don't you ask when you don't understand? You silly fool! Eat it yourself now! You did this intentionally so that you are not given a chore in future!' etc. etc.

Now, think over this; for a mere ten Rupees, the child had to put up with so much. Perhaps it wasn't even the child's fault. Probably, the shopkeeper didn't have cumin-seed biscuits in stock and gave him another variety of biscuits advising him to return it if you are not satisfied. Perhaps a packet of cumin-seed cost fifteen Rupees and the shopkeeper shoved a packet costing ten Rupees into his hands or anything else could have transpired. At this juncture, your responsibility is to firstly congratulate the child. At least thank him for bringing the item. Thereafter, ask him the reason for bringing the incorrect item. Once you are informed of the reason, explain to the child: "Son! Before leaving the shop, examine your goods and your change. If something is not available in one shop, try elsewhere. Check the prices marked on the items. Ask the shopkeeper if the item can be returned if we are not entirely satisfied with it." In this manner, avoid rebuffing the child's preferences and do not dampen his spirit but rather assist him in making the right choice.

Nâdir was but a young boy. One day his father took him along to the market-place. After doing his shopping, he took Nâdir to one of the shops and asked him to select a vest for himself. Being a young child, he started heaving all the vests into disarray and finally chose a red vest. He gestured to his father and he approved. His father purchased the vest but when he got home, he remarked: "Lady, our Nâdir is an absolute fool! He doesn't even know how to choose something. Look at his choice! How bizarre!" Now, when Nâdir overheard his father's recriminations, it broke his heart. For the rest of his life perhaps he wouldn't want to ever select clothing for himself.

Ponder over this incident. Isn't this a form of antagonism towards the child? Probably, the father regarded his son as one of his contemporaries. Just as friends needle and taunt one another's preferences, the father rebuffed his son's preferences. Even if the item was inappropriate or terrible,

there are other methods of rectifying the child's predilections. A critical or taunting attitude would prove disastrous to any form of remedial endeavours. We earnestly appeal to you that you make an all out attempt to set your children onto the right path, be it in the purchase of goods, in their preferences or in other social dealings but on no account tarnish their faculty of judgment.

One of the key factors affecting this faculty of judgement is that when the father is furious with the child, he doesn't consider the child a child anymore. The father analyses the child through his own age and experience and if the child fails to perform in accordance to the father's competence or the child fails to accomplish what is required of him, the father 'honours' the child with appellations like 'stupid, dimwit, moron', etc. Every Muslim father should repent from this misdemeanour and visualise the scene when every human being will stand before Allâh ﷻ on the day of judgement and be made to account for every moment of his life on this earth. The divine rights of Allâh ﷻ may be forgiven on account of repentance and forgiveness but the rights of other human beings will be dealt with very severely. So, don't regard this as a trivial sin.

Our negligence should not undermine the child's future prospects. Who knows what abilities and proficiencies the child would have portrayed in his adulthood if only his father was not guilty of subverting his son's faculty of judgement. If this is the attitude of the father, the child would always be wary of making his own decisions with the belief that perhaps he is wrong.

Ponder over this cool-headedly. Close your eyes and visualise your death. If you had to pass on now, would your son breathe a sigh of relief or would he utter a groan of lamentation? Will my son regard me as a compassionate educator or as a cruel castigator? Will he view me as his reformer or as an antagonistic father? Now open your eyes

and make a sincere resolution that you will regard a child as just that - a child, in the future. You will not treat him as a forty-year old man. You will not regard him as an adult and criticise him accordingly. You will stimulate his decision-making and lead him onto the correct path. You will play the role of a pious and devoted father. May Allâh ﷻ assist you and all other Muslim parents. Âmîn.

The Benefits

If you are always left furious over the child's unseemly behaviour, ponder over the aforementioned in solitude. Think about the benefits attached to rectifying the child's faculty of judgement and the advantages of you withholding your fury. Pondering over the advantages would allow you a great degree of restraint and Insha Allâh, Allâh ﷻ will guide you at those crucial moments of imminent misjudgement.

1. The first and foremost advantage to this would be the revival of a Sunnah of Rasûlullâh ﷺ. Hadrat Anas رضي الله عنه says: "I had served Rasûlullâh ﷺ for a period of ten years. Within this entire period, whenever I did anything, not once did he question my judgement and whenever I failed to do something, not once did he ask why I failed to carry out the task." *[Shamâil Tirmidhî p.207]*

2. The second benefit to this is that even if the child is weak, naive or stupid, the problem can be rectified through your patience. Once you exercise tolerance with the child and you compassionately educate him, his naivety and stupidity may be eradicated altogether. You will notice a marked progress in his intellectual and mental development. What greater benefit can there be than you being instrumental in the rehabilitation of a foolish member of Ummat-e-Muhammadiyyah. You have been awarded the honour of serving a despondent child. Think about it. You may be able to vent your anger on this child by hurling a barrage of derogatory names upon

him but if you exercise tolerance, the child will be rescued from a number of Dînî (religious) as well as *dunyawî* (worldly) shortcomings. In other words, you have saved your descendants as well.

3. The third benefit is that just as you hope to be rewarded for Nafl Salâh, charity and other good deeds, if you fulfil this responsibility for the pleasure of Allâh, your reward will be multiplied much more than the reward of optional prayer and charity. You will also be honoured with a multitude of virtues and rewards mentioned in a number of Ahâdîth kept in store for those who suppress their anger. Who knows? Perhaps a trivial action such as this would court the pleasure of Allâh ﷻ. The pleasure of Allâh ﷻ, in turn, brings about sheer bless in this world as well as the next. Allâh ﷻ states: "The pleasure of Allâh is the greatest. This is the most exalted success." *[Sûrah Taubah verse 72].*

In other words, the pleasure of Allâh ﷻ is more sought after than all the other delights of this world and the next. In fact, Jannah is also coveted because it is a rank of the divine pleasure of Allâh. Allâh ﷻ will shower the believers with every type of physical and spiritual bliss in Jannah but the greatest blessing is the perpetual pleasure of the true beloved, i.e. Allâh ﷻ. It is reported in the Ahâdîth that Allâh ﷻ would call out to the people of Jannah, to which they would reply: "Labbaik!" Allâh ﷻ will ask: "Are you satisfied now?" The dwellers of Jannah will reply: "How can we not be satisfied when You have showered us with the 'pinnacle of delights'?" Allâh ﷻ will say: "Are you prepared to accept something more delightful than what you have already been given?" They will submit: "Our Lord! Is there anything else better than this?" Allâh ﷻ will reply: "I will unfurl My perpetual happiness and pleasure over you. After this, you will

never attract my wrath and anger." *[Tafsîr Uthmânî vol.1 pg.666]*

4. The fourth benefit is that if you employ tact, wisdom, tolerance and affection when educating the child and you combined this with special Du'â for the child, Allâh ﷻ will bless you with the bounty of *'Radâ bil Qadâ* (submission to predestination). So your tolerance, polite manner and affectionate nature has contributed to this great bounty. In fact, the magnitude of this bounty can be gauged from the fact that Rasûlullâh ﷺ had implored Allâh ﷻ to bestow him with this *Ni'mah* (bounty) in the following Du'â:

اَللّٰهُمَّ ارْضِنِیْ بِقَضَائِكَ وَ بَارِكْ لِیْ فِيْمَا قُدِّرَ لِیْ حَتّٰى لَا اُحِبَّ تَعْجِيْلَ مَا
اَخَّرْتَ وَلَا تَأْخِيْرَ مَا عَجَّلْتَ

"O Allâh! Make me content with whatever You have destined for me. Bless me in whatever has been ordained for me so that I do not yearn to expedite that which has been deferred nor do I crave to delay that which has been expedited."

If you are content with whatever type of children Allâh ﷻ has bestowed upon you, express gratitude upon this bounty of 'submission to His will.' If the child is born with some deficiency or the other, it is no fault of the child. Similarly, if a child is relatively less intelligent or he is unable to express his intelligence effectively or he is unable to conceal his deficiencies skilfully like other children, then criticising him repeatedly is tantamount to condemnation of the will of Allâh ﷻ. It is a form of critical analysis levelled against Allâh ﷻ.

You explained something to two children. One of them understands immediately. When the other child requests you to re-explain, you are gripped with fury and rage. You scream at him: "Don't you understand English? Shall

I explain in Persian? Why don't you listen attentively? Should I write it on the board for you!" etc. etc.

When these two children return after doing whatever chores you have set out for them, one of them executed your instructions to the letter whilst the other failed to act as instructed. And this is what happens quite often. Now, you rage at the child: "How foolish of you! You can't even purchase a loaf of bread! You are so stupid you can't even buy a few biscuits properly! Even a suckling child is more intelligent than you are! You are very good at getting big and fat, you covet new pants and shirts and you very well understand matters relating to your personal benefit! Look at your brother and sister, or look at your cousins, they are much younger than you are but you are just getting taller for nothing like a camel. You can't even walk decently. You have humiliated me before my friends. Look at your brother! He does everything with such diligence and decorum." Etc. etc.

Remember such an attitude will be tantamount to condemnation of his natural and innate abilities. *Therefore, repent with heartfelt sincerity and make a firm resolution that as of today, you would refrain from criticising this creation of Allâh ﷻ. He is well aware of who He creates and the wisdom behind each person's limited mental abilities. He, the absolute sovereign and the all-knowing wants you as a parent to take into consideration His creation. Whatever attributes you wish to develop within the child, burn the midnight oil, weep before Allâh ﷻ and implore Him to assist you. For instance, you may make Du'â as follows: "O Allâh! Render this child the coolness of my eyes. Grant him an outstanding faculty of judgment. Honour him in this world as well as the next. Accept him for the services of Your Dîn. Shield him from all forms of calamities. Keep him safe from misfortune right until his death. Grant him*

an abundance of Halâl sustenance. Protect him from miserliness and extravagance. Bless him, myself and all other Muslim parents with the great boon of *'Radâ bil Qadâ'* (submission to divine fate)." Âmîn.

Bear in mind that all parents are overjoyed with their children's intelligence, wittiness and celebrated faculty of judgment. They are even proud about it and express profound gratitude unto Allâh ﷻ. However, blessed is the courage of those parents, particularly the father, who express gratitude and exercise patience over children who are dumb-witted and weak. They deserve to be commended by all the members of Ummat-e-Muhammadiyyah for their unfailing efforts in rearing such children. May they be blessed with the pleasure of Allâh ﷻ.

The Perils

If the child's faculty of judgement is impaired, a myriad of individual and collective pitfalls are bound to occur. Some of them are:

1. The greatest pitfall is that such an action draws the wrath of Allâh ﷻ. He who courts the displeasure of Allâh ﷻ is certain to wreck his optimum lifestyle whilst he who pursues the pleasure of Allâh ﷻ is certain to restore his wretched condition to one of betterment.

2. If we do accept that the child was really at fault, you did not treat him like an adult nor did you assess him on the level of his contemporaries but the child fails to do what normal children of his age are required to do, then definitely, it is the deficiency or negligence of the child. In spite of this certainty, the solution to this problem does not lie in reprimanding or humiliating the child the moment he does something wrong. This would further intensify the malady. In other words, reprimanding him

or humiliating him at that precise moment may aggravate his negligence but this approach is not very promising as far as eradicating his negligence is concerned.

What greater malady can there be than augmenting the batch of fools by adding on yet another member to them especially if he happens to be our own beloved son? Although we had no intention of doing so, we are turning a marginally dim child into a complete stupid. You are aggravating his problem by calling him names like 'stupid, dumb, foolish', etc. or by threatening him in a thunderous tone that you will throw him out of the house, etc.

3. Some timid children are so affected by harsh language as though such words are imprinted on their hearts with inerasable ink. Such children, in moments of solitude, tend to think to themselves: "I am such a 'bad' boy, I hope Allâh ﷻ takes my life away. Why don't they just kill me once and for all? I am not intelligent. They always call me a stupid. Mummy says I'm a dumb-wit, my madam at school says I'm fit for nothing and even my elder sister always scolds me."

Therefore, ponder over this delicate situation with a cool heart and open mind and then take a constructive step. Think about it! What greater loss can there be than a young child wishing for death due to our distasteful attitude? It is wholly inappropriate for a Muslim to strangle the child's aspirations and hopes in this manner let alone for a father to 'bury his child alive' with his conduct of cruelty and severity.

4. *The parents are often under the notion that harshness, relentless admonishment and tongue-lashing would straighten the child out. However, this is a vain thought.*

This has a negative impact on the personality of the child. He falls prey to insecurity and emotional imbalance. His negative tendencies are bound to come to the fore. For example, he is prone to become withdrawn, introverted and irritable.

5. The fifth peril is that you could be grooming a patient for the psychiatric ward. Sometimes, apart from the brain, this illness affects the other parts of the body as well. Subsequently, this brings about an additional burden in terms of doctors and medical costs, etc.

6. Experience bears testimony to the fact that gentle and kind words are more impressive than harsh words. Now, in light of experience, mull over this; when a person wishes to pour something into a punctured container, what good can he expect? When a harsh parent ruptures the child's heart with a bout of vicious battering, what good will he be able to deposit into such a heart.

A wise man says: "Instilling fear or unnecessary awe into the child can be likened to a young and tender plant buffeted by a gust of wind or it can be likened to a flower left to the mercy of a hurricane." The wise also caution: "The father who fails to ward off immorality with good character is not fit to be called a father". Generally parents are not very concerned about their own immoral behaviour nor is there any concern to improve themselves as embodiments of perfection. When a deficient person regards himself as perfect, it creates a problem of horrendous proportions. Hence, we should all regard ourselves as imperfect and beseech Allâh ﷻ to improve our spiritual and moral lot.

7. Sometimes certain trivial statements – trivial in the eyes of the father – ruin the child's faculty of judgement. For instance, the father addresses the son: "You are so big, yet you don't understand such a simple matter!"

This is unjust and a breach of faith on the part of the father. This is unjust in the sense that the father treated the young boy like an old man and it is a breach of faith in a sense that this is an unfathomable enigma for the child. The father regards it as child play and he is under the impression that it would be just as easy for the child. The father is thus guilty of violating the trust of the child. Let us examine a simple scenario:

In the family business, if the father makes some mistake and his father, i.e. the child's grandfather admonishes his son (child's father) thus: "You are a father of four and still you don't understand! When will you learn to be more responsible?" Or let us examine another scenario whereby the old man rebukes his son (child's father) thus: "What *is* your problem? Why did you foolishly submit your resignation? You could have at least asked me! *Why did you* supply so and so the goods? Don't you know how he stretches us with the terms? That person is like a leech. *You should never supply goods* to him!" etc. etc. *(How would you react if your father speaks to you in this manner?)*

Formulate your own plan of action to acquire these benefits and to abstain from these detriments. Make a firm resolution that you will not act as foolishly in the future. Consult with your wife and your other close friends as well. Prove yourself to be an ideal father.

Apart from this, we mention a few more advices. We hope these would also be of benefit to you:

1. *Close this book and ponder over the harms of your indiscretion. Make the wife also aware of the harms surrounding the ruining of the child's faculty of judgment.*

2. Encourage your colleagues who are fathers like yourself. Inform them of the benefits and encourage them to refrain from its detriments.

Strategies to Stimulate Intellectual Proficiency

1. When you go shopping to the market place (or shop) accompanied by your children, familiarise them with the commodities on sale. For instance, the price, weight, quantity, etc.
2. Encourage the child to ask questions. Prepare yourself mentally for all his questions. Don't hesitate in congratulating him on the questions he poses.
3. Instead of focussing on his misdemeanours and bad habits, focus on his good actions.
4. Enlighten the child on the causes of his achievements and failures and bolster his spirits over his achievements.
5. Convince the child that he can do the task with the help of Allāh ﷻ but at the same time teach him the correct manner of carrying out the task.
6. Allow the child to choose his own profession. Don't coerce him into a profession that appeals to you.
7. Whilst responding to his questions, avoid employing an overbearing attitude. Speak in a soft tone and assume an indulgent stance, for this will enable the child to grasp more easily.
8. Allow the child some time to ponder over the answer and permit him to explain in his own words.
9. Point out the reason for his incorrect or correct answer.
10. Allow him to ascertain his own errors and later on you would obviously assist him in correcting them.
11. Also pursue extra-curricular activities. For instance, draw a map of the road leading from the house to his school and explain to him the route, etc. Draw a table of historical events in chronological order and give him a lesson in history. You may even teach him some culinary (cooking) skills. Enlighten him with certain basics like

temperature, measuring of ingredients, etc. Perhaps this would do away with the complaint that the child is learning absolutely nothing.

Child Nurturing – Your Greatest Fortune

Sometimes, due to a busy schedule or a hectic lifestyle, the parents or one of them views child rearing as a burden or an extremely taxing task. At times, they are under the impression that child rearing is beyond them and they prefer to pay someone else or employ someone else to do the job as long as they are relieved of this burden. Why is this? "I am extremely busy, I don't have the time, I get upset very quickly, I have a short fuse, I am unable to teach the children, I don't get any joy from teaching them, my heart is not in it." etc. The solution to these problems is that you refrain from considering this task of child-rearing as an encumbrance. Don't regard it as a demanding strain or as an insurmountable predicament.

Regard it as a source of your good fortune. Raising children, advising them, making arrangements for their education and discipline, striving to elevate them to the pinnacles of character, taking out some valuable time to make special Du'â for them, offering them for the service of Allâh's Dîn, providing them, through your heartfelt Du'âs, the bounties of both the worlds, etc. Regard all of this as a remarkable fortune. Accept it as a personal necessity. View it as a source of perpetual reward. Regard it as a means of producing a noble individual for the benefit of society. Consider it an immense favour upon the forthcoming generations. Look at it as a form of assisting your life-partner. Regard it as a source of acquiring the pleasure of Allâh ﷻ. Furthermore, consider it as a means of adding another fine individual to the Ummah of Rasûlullâh ﷺ.

Ponder over all these benefits. Request the wife also to ponder over the numerous worldly and divine benefits of

raising a child. Ask her to think about some of the advantages whilst you ponder over a few more. At the same time, both of you should reflect over the detriments of desisting from bringing the child up correctly. Also discuss this issue with your close friends. Explain to them that if we neglect to focus our attention upon their appropriate upbringing, if we fail to make some time for them from our hectic schedules, if we are indifferent to their condition in Madrasah and school, if we are going to be nonchalant about the friends they are hanging about with after school, if we don't bother about the books they are reading, if we fail to protect them from the evil of television and from immoral friends and if we fail to periodically liaise with their teachers, reflect over the detrimental outcome of our actions.

Inshâ Allâh, once you discuss the benefits and the detriments of your stance, you will develop a natural inclination to educate and rear the child correctly. Subsequently, sacrificing some time for the child, teaching him, moulding him within a Dînî mindset, instilling the greatness of Allâh ﷻ within their hearts, developing the true love for Rasûlullâh ﷺ within their hearts, teaching them respect for the elders and affection towards youngsters, making them carry out their homework, keeping a close eye on their attendance and other such related tasks will become easier and more gratifying.

Then, just as we are delighted with the company of our friends, we will become even more ecstatic in rearing our children. Just as we are ecstatic over flicking through the daily papers and thumbing through meaningless story books we would be even more elated with the company of our wives and children and in attending to all their problems. Just as we are overjoyed at a business deal coming through, we would take more pleasure in correcting their moral conduct and behaviour. And just as a labourer becomes despondent over his failure to acquire overtime pay or he is

upset over a cut in his salary, you will become even more distressed with him missing school or Madrasah. Just as a businessman is disappointed over the cancellation of a lucrative order, you will become even more disheartened over the child's failure in any of his examinations.

Now, both the father and mother should ponder over how they can rear this child. Now when they are well aware of the benefits of applying their precious hours behind the child and they are well aware of the detrimental outcome of not spending any time in bringing up their children, they should ponder, "What is the best method of acquiring these benefits? Which is the best way to avoid these detriments?"

Think about it yourself and consult with the wife as well. Thereafter, settle on a strategy that the entire responsibility of the child's education and behaviour rests exclusively on your shoulders. Avoid unburdening your responsibilities onto the shoulders of others. Regardless of how affectionate or proficient the teacher is and no matter how excellent the school may be, don't ever get comfortable by surrendering this responsibility, this means of immense reward and divine pleasure over to someone else. Regard it as your very personal sense of duty. Yes, your wife, the teacher and principal are undeniably your assistants but you should take on this responsibility as wholly your very own. This will, *Inshâ Allâh, eliminate all the complaints most parents have like:*

1. *My wife is not concerned about the education and behaviour of the children.*

2. *My child went to so-and-so school and turned out to be a spoilt brat. The school is utterly insensitive towards the child. In spite of fleecing me with such hefty fees, he wasted his time in school.*

3. My son was unable to complete his Hifz in so and so Madrasah. Qârî Sâhib, his teacher was frequently on leave. He is unable to read properly and he didn't even complete his *Pârah* (a portion of short Sûrahs). He wasted a lot of time in that place. Etc. etc.

All such complaints will cease if you give the child your personal attention. If you are not well educated nor are you well clued-up with details about his Madrasah and school, the least you could do is carry out the following three tasks:

1. Request the school or Madrasah to send you a monthly update on the child's attendance. Express your anger over any form of absenteeism. Employ all forms of disciplinary measures appropriate to the child's age. Instil into his mind and heart the detriments of absenteeism in such a persuasive manner that he regards poor attendance as an unpardonable crime. Regard absenteeism as a source of ruin and destruction in this world as well as the next and consider it a source of regret in the future.

2. Scrutinize his examination report and test card. A few days before the examination, reduce or altogether stop all form of play and recreation. Seat him with you and make him study. Give him a prize when he excels in the examination. If he scores low marks or if his performance is relatively poor, have a chat with him. Ascertain the reason for coming down in this examination in relation to his excellent performance of the past. Upon informing you of his reasons, consult the wife and ponder over your slip-ups. Deliberate over your deficiencies and the shortcomings of the child and make an all out effort to resolve the problems.

3. Be cautious of his friends especially his close relatives whom he tends to frequent like his maternal

and paternal cousins. If any of them are ill mannered or tend to have bad habits, trim down his contact with him. If the child's maternal cousins are obstacles in the correct upbringing of your child, take the wife into your confidence and try to keep them at bay. For instance, you restrain the child from watching television. If you fear that the child will succumb to this evil habit if he has to visit his aunt or uncle's homes, prevent him from going there. Or for instance, you made the child meticulous about his homework whilst his cousins are not the same or you made your daughter exceptionally meticulous about wearing her scarf etc. whilst the conditions in the other homes are not as stringent or you are particular about your seven-year old son performing his Salâh whilst the relatives of the other home couldn't be bothered or you developed within your children the habit of sleeping immediately after the 'Ishâ Salâh whilst children in the other homes tend to retire awfully late at night. Similarly, prevent your children from joining other children of the locality who hail from irreligious families where discipline is of no concern. So protect your children from an evil environment and from bad company just as you would protect them from scorpions and snakes because an evil environment and bad friends flushes all the efforts of the parents down the drain.

Typical Complaints of Children

The poor parents expend their bodies and souls day and night for the ultimate benefit of their children. What would happen if the same children pour water over the soaring expectations of their parents? How would the parents feel if the same children rebel against their noble aspirations and turn out to be doggedly defiant? There are no words to describe the soul-destroying anguish and distress they would go through. However, the rebellion or defiance of the

children - if examined closely - is not entirely of their own doing. They were not born rebellious and defiant but the ensuing circumstances and the ghastly atmosphere they were raised in, contributes to their defiance and rebelliousness.

Nonetheless, we hereunder offer a few words of advice, which we urge the parents to read with an open mind in solitude. We also request you to make Du'â for a better understanding of these advices.

Points to Ponder for the Parents

Undoubtedly parents do not enjoy absolute control. Yes, what is within their control is that they are able to ponder over their own conduct. In the light of Dîn, they should take stock of their individual behaviour. As far as the education and upbringing of the children is concerned, are you proficiently fulfilling all the responsibilities Allâh ﷻ has placed upon your shoulders? Are you certain you are not lacking in fulfilling the rights of these children as enforced by Allâh ﷻ? Your children will only be able to fulfil your grand expectations if you yourself are not unmindful of fulfilling their rights. The noble morals you wish your children to be graced with, their resolute dutifulness, faithful obedience and religious nature that every father dreams of, can come true. Your high expectations will bear fruit only if you discharge your responsibilities with all earnestness and devout sincerity. A child's defiance and rebelliousness is no doubt a source of immense anguish for the parents but they should also ponder that perhaps such defiance is the outcome of their woeful negligence or their dreadful deficiency in fulfilling the rights of the child. How can the children identify your rights if you did not make them aware of these rights? How can children serve and respect their parents if they have not been acquainted with this obligation? If you fail to respect their feelings and emotions, how do you expect them to identify your feelings and

emotions? If you fail to express your love for them or your attitude demonstrates that due to the challenges of child rearing, you are better off without them, how do you expect them to love you or to serve you?

If you are exclusively concerned about your personal comfort whilst turning a blind eye to their needs, how do you expect them to identify what your needs are? If you are utterly apathetic towards the betterment of society and the establishment of a suitable culture, how do you expect your children to sustain such an ideology? So pin your hopes upon your children according to the scope of your preparation and expect their conduct with you to correspond with your conduct with them.

Apart from your conduct with the child; his upbringing, education, background, friends, relatives etc. are factors that to some extent or the other have a bearing in the making or the breaking of the child.

Similarly, if you treat your parents - the children's grandparents – malevolently or nastily and you continuously bluster on about their old age, won't your children conduct themselves in the same manner with you?

So make a firm resolve that as from today you will not be neglectful of their upbringing and education and you will not consider them as an intolerable burden. In an attempt to rear them appropriately, try to implement the following strategies:

1. Be consistent with your five daily Salâh with Jamâ'at. Avoid neglecting a single Salâh with Jamâ'at. Very kindly and lovingly encourage your wife to be regular with her Salâh as well.

2. To the best of your ability undertake to make your income as Halâl and wholesome as possible. Avoid engaging in any form of trading activities during Salâh times. Close your shop the moment you hear the Azân. If you are employed, take off at these times. Even if you have to suffer a wage-cut don't bother. If, Allâh ﷻ forbid, your employer is not willing to give you time off for Salâh look for another job elsewhere. If you are earning eight thousand in your current job and you are offered six thousand, opt for the latter. Be rest assured that this smaller amount will be so blessed that the higher amount won't be able to address the issues the relatively smaller amount takes care of. You won't enjoy such tranquillity and comfort as you would from the smaller amount.

3. If you are a trader, refrain from falsehood, deception, betrayal, cruelty to staff and miserliness in spending in the path of Allâh ﷻ. And if you are an employee serve your employer diligently. If you were absent or came late to work ask the employer to forgive you or return a proportionate part of your wage to the employer. Whatever work has been assigned to you, ensure that you are not lacking in at least trying to complete the task. Be rest assured that whatever you earn as a diligent employee will contain a mass of *Barakah* (blessings).

4. Continue seeking the Du'âs of your parents. Don't go to their home empty-handed. Take something or the other whenever you visit them. If they have left this world, read something for them or give some charity on their behalf and convey the Thawâb (reward) to them.

5. Maintain a favourable relationship with your siblings (brothers and sisters). Now and again find out how they are doing. Don't go to their homes empty-handed. At least take some fruit of the season or

some clothing for them. Give them whatever you can afford. Also strive to bring them closer towards Dîn. If your parents have already departed from this world, ensure that your siblings obtain the full share of their inheritance especially the sisters.

6. Take active part in humanitarian efforts like assisting unfortunate relatives, serving the blind and disabled, helping out underprivileged patients, attending to the educational needs of the poor etc. Offer your financial, intellectual and personal services for these good courses. Good character, pleasant social behaviour and fulfilment of human rights will make you an ideal father. The outcome of this, especially due to the Du'âs of these destitute souls, will be that Allâh ﷻ will take great service from your children and grandchildren in time to come. These children will, Inshâ Allâh, turn out to be a source of 'coolness to the eye' in this world as well as the next. How aptly someone once remarked: "Be affectionate to those on the earth, the Being on the throne will shower you with affection."

7. Make a point of consulting your children as well. *Mashwarah* (mutual consultation) is a Sunnah. Amongst the commendable attributes of the believers mentioned (in the Holy Qur'ân), one of them is *Mashwarah*. *Mashwarah* dispels impending catastrophes. It bonds the hearts together. It also confers a status to each member of the family. Mashwarah enhances one's faith on predestination. It also teaches one to express his opinion. So make a point of consulting with other family members as well. Today the general complaint of the children is that the father fails to consult with them and he does as he pleases. Subsequently, when the business suffers a loss or the family is confronted with a crisis, the children will also face the appalling consequences

of the father's arbitrary decisions. No matter how perfect your decision may seem to you and notwithstanding your absolute conviction in your decision, consult with them as well. Rasûlullâh ﷺ, in spite of being the leader of all the Ambiyâ ﷺ and despite constant *Wahî* (divine revelation), still consulted the Sahâbah ؓ on issues affecting them. If there was anyone independent of Mashwarah in this world, it would have been Rasûlullâh ﷺ. But he nonetheless engaged in Mashwarah with the Sahâbah ؓ. So we are also required to consult with our wives and grown-up children on important issues affecting the household. Listen attentively to what they have to say and make a decision after pondering over everyone's views. If you decide to proceed against their views, at least take them into your confidence, as this will lead them to believe that it is also their decision.

'Strike while the Iron is Hot'

The ideal father is he who waits for the right opportunity to avail himself of the advantage it offers. A constant unceasing barrage of warnings and advices is sometimes wearisome. Once a few prisoners were brought before Rasûlullâh ﷺ. Amongst them was a woman as well. When her glance fell onto her infant who was amongst another group of prisoners, she, out of unbridled emotion and uninhibited love dashed towards him, picked him up, showered him with her hugs and kisses and started feeding him. Rasûlullâh ﷺ asked the Sahâbah ؓ: "If the lady had the option, do you think she will hurl her child into a fire?" "By Allâh!" they replied, "she will never do such a thing." Upon this Rasûlullâh ﷺ remarked: "Allâh is many times more affectionate towards His servants than this woman is towards her child." *[Sahîh Muslim vol.2 p.356]*

When Rasûlullâh ﷺ perceived a touching atmosphere he availed himself of this ideal opportunity to draw the Sahâbah's ؓ attention towards the love and affection of Allâh ﷻ. He employed a question-and-answer approach to instil this reality within their hearts in such a manner that none of them would forget this scene for the rest of their lives. They in turn would broach this incident before others whenever they chose to discuss the immensity of Allâh's ﷻ love and affection.

Come, let us analyse another such incident. In Sahîh Muslim it is reported that Hadrat Jâbir ؓ narrates: "On returning from a village, Rasûlullâh ﷺ was passing through the market place of Madînah. He was surrounded on both sides by a number of people. A dead small-eared kid was lying nearby. Rasûlullâh ﷺ grasped one of its ears and asked: "Which one of you is prepared to purchase this dead kid for a Dirham?" The Sahâbah ؓ replied: "We won't purchase it any cost. Of what value is it to us? Rasûlullâh ﷺ then enquired: "Do any of you want this?" The Sahâbah ؓ reacted by submitting: "O Rasûl of Allâh ﷺ! If it was alive it was defective due to its stunted ears and now it is lifeless. Obviously there is now no question about us not wanting it." Upon this Rasûlullâh ﷺ remarked: "By Allâh! Just as this is valueless in your eyes, this world is many times more valueless in the eyes of Allâh." *[Mishkât vol.2 p.439 & Sahîh Muslim]*

Ponder over this incident. Rasûlullâh ﷺ is entering Madînah with the Sahâbah ؓ. A dead goat is lying close by. Generally people tend to scurry away from such a foul-smelling area. Probably the Sahâbah ؓ also wanted to dash through this appalling scene as swiftly as possible. Realising the unsettling sentiments of the Sahâbah ؓ, Rasûlullâh ﷺ took full advantage of the situation in revealing the insignificance of this world in a manner that the apparent glitter of this world does not lure them away from the objective of the hereafter.

It is a vital obligation of an ideal father to ensure that he does not disregard the perfect opportunities presented to him by the current situation. Parents should explore the ideal opportunities for the upbringing of their children. If they wish to drive a point home, rather wait for an ideal opportunity to do so. Take maximum benefit from the situation as and when it presents itself.

It is reported in Sahîh Bukhârî and Sahîh Muslim that a person appeared before Rasûlullâh ﷺ and asked: "O Rasûl of Allâh ﷺ! When is the day of reckoning?" This looks like a somewhat simple question that anyone could have posed and Rasûlullâh ﷺ could have provided a straightforward answer thereby terminating any further conversation. He could have silenced the questioner by mentioning a few signs of Qiyâmah or he could have expressed his ignorance by merely saying that he has no idea or he could have conceded that Allâh ﷻ alone knows. However, when Rasûlullâh ﷺ noticed the apprehension this person entertains for Qiyâmah, instead of answering his question he responded with another question: "What preparations have you made for it?"

Rasûlullâh ﷺ steered his anxiety towards a more positive and optimistic perspective. He attempted to impress upon the questioner that the issue is not centred around when is the day of reckoning but actually on the extent of our preparation for it. Rasûlullâh ﷺ encouraged the person to take stock of his current situation. On reflection the man replied: "The love of Allâh ﷻ and His Rasûl ﷺ".

In other words, my provisions for the journey towards the hereafter revolve around my love for Allâh ﷻ and His Rasûl ﷺ. I wish to seek their ultimate pleasure in whatever I do. The objective of my life and the pivot of all my affairs is the pleasure of Allâh ﷻ and His Rasûl ﷺ. On hearing this response, Rasûlullâh ﷺ cheerfully responded: "So you will be with those you love." *[Sahîh Muslim vol.2 p.332]*

In other words, if you love Allâh ﷻ and His Rasûl ﷺ, you are sure to acquire their divine proximity and tomorrow on the day of judgement you will be blessed with the company of Rasûlullâh ﷺ.

These are just a few examples selected from the vast treasures of Ahâdîth to give you an indication of how Rasûlullâh ﷺ seized extensive advantage of a situation in order to mould the Sahâbah's ؓ frame of mind and in order to further their abilities.

You should also adopt a similar stance by searching for the right opportunity to make your point. The moment an opportunity presents itself, make maximum use of it by advising your children and driving your point home. For instance you are on holiday with your family in a very scenic location like Maree, Ayyûbiyah, Abbotabad or Mauritius. Now when you witness your children enthralled by a very enchanting natural scenery, make use of this opportunity by enlightening them thus: *"Children! What a breathtaking scenery this is, but there is another much more captivating sight than this one and that is Jannah. It is exclusively reserved for people of Îmân. It can be acquired through good works like Salâh, Tilâwat of the Holy Qur'ân, Tabligh etc."*

Together with this advice make Du'â: "O Allâh! My words are ineffective. Only You can influence the impact of my words. None but You can transform the hearts of people. O Allâh! Make my words significantly inspiring and turn their hearts towards Dîn and towards the spiritually radiant Sunnah of Your beloved Rasûl ﷺ."

This practice will, Inshâ Allâh, have a considerable impact on the children and not only will they remember your advice for the rest of their lives but they are sure to pass this advice on to their children as well.

Education through Stories and Anecdotes

Stories play a vital role in moulding the mind. Whatever a person listens to in the form of a story is more impressive. This is why the father should read stories to the children about the Ambiyâ ؑ, Sahâbah ؓ, Tâbi'în ؒ, Tab-e-Tabi'in ؒ and other saints, at night or at any other appropriate time. He should also enlighten them about the lesson or the moral of the story. Similarly, stimulate within them a spirit to revive Dîn and a determination to resolve the problems of the Ummah. Enlighten them about the hardships these saints suffered in the path of Allâh ﷻ. They spent their lives, time and wealth in this divine path and this is how they irrigated this tree of Islâm. After their interminable sacrifices this Dîn has reached us. So we should also cherish this Dîn and make a concerted effort to promote it even further.

As mentioned in a number of Hadîth books, there were three men from the Banî Isrâîl. One was a leper, the second was bald and the third was blind. In order to put them to a test, Allâh ﷻ sent an angel in the form of a human being to each one of them. The angel set off to the leper first and asked: "What do you desire the most?" He replied: "I long for a cure from this loathsome disease due to which people shirk away from me. I yearn for a beautiful-coloured and fine-textured skin instead. The angel passed a hand over his entire body and with the grace of Allâh ﷻ, he was blessed with what he yearned for. In other words, a beautiful and clear skin resulting in a cure from this disease. The angels then asked: "What type of wealth do you desire the most?" He replied: "A she-camel." The angel then made over a ten-month pregnant camel to him and said: "May Allâh ﷻ bless this wealth."

The angel then set out for the bald man. He posed the same questions he posed to the leper. The man replied: "My greatest desire is to eliminate my baldness so that people may be more inclined towards me instead of despising me."

The angels passed his hand over the man's head. With the will of Allâh ﷻ, he was immediately purged of this deficiency and blessed with a beautiful head of hair. He then asked him what type of wealth he is fond of. He replied: "Cows." The angel then gave him a cow and after making Du'â of Barakah for him, moved off.

He finally came to the blind person and put forward the same questions he posed to the leper and the bald person. He submitted: "Regaining my eyesight to view the splendour of this world is my heartfelt desire." The angel passed his hand over his eyes once. Through the grace of Allâh ﷻ, he regained his eyesight. The angel then asked: "What type of wealth would you like." He replied: "Goats." The angel then presented him with a fine goat and whilst making Du'â of Barakah for him, he departed.

All three of them started living a blissfully content life. Allâh ﷻ blessed them in their wealth to such an extent that all three of them became owners of extensive flocks of animals. All three of them became tremendously wealthy.

After a few years, acting on the divine commandment of Allâh ﷻ, the same angel in the form of the same human being went up to the leper first and lamented: "I am a traveller. My provisions for the road are depleted. In the name of the Being who has blessed you with beautiful skin and immense wealth, I beseech you to give me a camel to reach my destination." The man repulsed the angel saying: "I inherited this wealth. I earned this wealth with the sweat of my brow." The 'traveller' angel countered: "Were you not suffering from leprosy? Aren't you the same man people looked down upon with disgust? Were you not miserably poor once after which Allâh ﷻ blessed you with immense wealth? If you are false in your claim, may Allâh ﷻ restore you to your original condition." As a result, Allâh ﷻ transformed him into his previously appalling condition.

The angel then proceeded to the bald man and expressed the same request to him. He responded just as the leper responded. As a result, Allâh ﷻ deprived him of all His bounties as well.

The angel thereafter set off for the blind man and made the same petition to him as well. The man replied: "All praise is solely due to Allâh ﷻ Who has restored my eyesight and blessed me with immense wealth. Take whatever you want. Regard the wealth as your very own. If I am unable to be of assistance to my brother what is the use of my wealth? I hope Allâh ﷻ will shower me with His bounties even more." The angel revealed: "I don't want anything. I was merely sent to put all three of you to a test. You excelled whilst Allâh ﷻ transformed your other two friends to their previous conditions because they expressed abrasive ingratitude towards the bounties of Allâh ﷻ instead of submitting before Him in gratitude. May Allâh ﷻ remain pleased with you and may He bless your wealth even further." Conveying such Du'âs, the angel departed. The man fell into Sajdah in expression of gratitude. *[Sahîh Muslim vol.2 p.408]*

You may elaborate for the child thus: "Son! See, the importance of expressing your gratitude unto Allâh ﷻ? The blind man expressed gratitude for which Allâh ﷻ sustained his wealth whilst the other two, due to their brazen ingratitude, were returned to their former conditions." The Holy Qur'ân, in the following verse, conveys the same message: "If You express gratitude I will increase you (i.e. your bounties in this world or the next) and if you display ingratitude, (then remember) My punishment is severe." *[Sûrah Ibrâhîm verse 7]*

The reality of *Shukr* (gratitude) can be summed up as follows: to abstain from utilising the bounties of Allâh ﷻ in His disobedience and in Harâm pursuits and to express gratitude verbally whilst ensuring that one's actions and

deeds conform to the dictates of Allâh ﷻ. Rasûlullâh ﷺ is reported to have declared: "He who is divinely blessed with gratitude will never be deprived of blessings and growth in his bounties." *[Mazharî]*

Allâh ﷻ proclaims: "And if you express a lack of gratitude towards My bounties, My punishment is also very severe." Ingratitude is summed up as follows: to utilise the bounties of Allâh ﷻ in His disobedience and in impermissible avenues or to show neglect in the fulfilment of His divine obligations. The punishment of displaying ingratitude towards the bounties of Allâh ﷻ may be meted out in this very world by being deprived of the bounty or by being afflicted with some other catastrophe due to which he will not be able to avail himself of the benefits of that bounty. This is apart from the punishment of the hereafter. *[Ma'âriful-Qur'ân vol.5 p.234]*

It is recorded in the books of Hadîth that a beggar appeared before Rasûlullâh ﷺ soliciting a handout. Rasûlullâh ﷺ offered him a date. He either refused to accept it or he tossed it away. Meanwhile another beggar appeared. Rasûlullâh ﷺ also gave him a date. The beggar ecstatically submitted: "Subhânallâh! A date from the master, Rasûlullâh ﷺ!" (In other words, what an honour to receive a gift from Rasûlullâh ﷺ.) He then directed his female servant to take the forty Dirhams left in safekeeping by Umme Salamah *radiallâhû 'anhâ* and hand them over to this grateful beggar. *[Tafsîr 'Uthmânî vol.2 p.716]* This is why we should be grateful at all times.

It is mentioned in the books of Hadîth that a man from the Banî Isrâîl approached another man for a loan of one thousand gold coins.
The creditor: Bring a witness to testify to this transaction.
The debtor: Allâh ﷻ will suffice as a witness.
The creditor: Bring a guarantor who will stand as surety for this loan.

The debtor: Allâh ﷻ will suffice as a guarantor.
The creditor: You have spoken the truth.
Saying this, he handed over the sum of money with an undertaking from the debtor to repay the loan within a specified period of time.

The debtor accepted the loan and went over the sea where he utilised the sum for whatever venture he had in mind. As the time for repayment appeared closer, the debtor, in spite of a frantic search, was unable to find a boat to cross over to the creditor. He got hold of a log of wood. After drilling a reasonable hole within it, he lodged the entire amount within it with a note to the creditor. He sealed the hole and as he came to the shore, he proclaimed: "O Allâh !You are very well aware of the loan I acquired from so and so. He asked for a surety and I replied that Allâh ﷻ is sufficient. He was content with this. When he requested a witness I said that Allâh ﷻ would suffice as a witness. He readily accepted this as well. I tried my level best to get a boat etc. to convey his right to him but to no avail. Now I consign this amount to Your trust."

Saying this, he consigned this log to the sea. Once the log disappeared from sight, he returned but continued his search for a boat across to the creditor. Meanwhile on the opposite shore, the creditor stared out to the shore in expectation of one of the ships or boats coming in with the repayment of the loan (as this was the prearranged date for the repayment of the loan). Suddenly his gaze fell on a log floating towards him. He picked it up with the purpose of using it as firewood. When he split it open, he found the money and the note within it. A while later, the debtor also turned up with another thousand coins.

The debtor: "By Allâh! I was anxiously trying to get this amount across to you but I was unable to get a boat across before this."
The creditor: "Did you send anything to me?"

The debtor: "I just mentioned to you that I was unable to get a boat before this."
The creditor: "Allâh ﷻ has already forwarded on your behalf the thousand coins you placed within the log. So you may return with your money. *[Sahîh Bukhârî vol.1 p.306, 324]*

Avail yourself of such incidents to explain to the child the impact of truthfulness and integrity. Look at the effect of striving to keep one's word; Allâh ﷻ conveyed the amount to the rightful creditor after the debtor consigned it to the sea. If we are truthful and keep to our word, Allâh ﷻ will also attend to and eradicate all our problems with His profound grace.

The message conveyed on the basis of a story or anecdote is more entertaining and impressive upon the audience. So take full advantage of a situation or incident to put your point across. Stories play a vital role in the education and upbringing of young children and students. They also shed light upon the importance of moral values. So avail yourself of this technique and try your level best to rear your children appropriately.

Characteristics of a Mentor

As far as education, upbringing and spiritual rectification are concerned, certain attributes are vital in the life of a mentor. Some of these attributes are listed hereunder:

1. Sincerity

Sincerity is the key feature without which no action is of any value. It is the responsibility of the mentor to ensure that he bears in mind the pleasure of Allâh ﷻ whilst engaged in spiritual development and upbringing. Vested interests should play no part in his endeavours. His objective should not be any form of material gain. He should be immersed in a spirit of acquiring the pleasure of Allâh ﷻ. Every facet of

his upbringing should reveal a sheen of sincerity and earnestness. Whether he advises or admonishes, whether he is affectionate or stern, whether he counsels his charges with love or reprimands them with sternness, every action should be inspired by sincerity. Any action performed without sincerity is not ultimately effective even if it may ostensibly be appealing to the eye. You have probably witnessed a number of parents or guardians employing a host of techniques in rearing their charges correctly. They take into account a number of psychological angles as well. All forms of astute measures are put to test but all their expectations are turned upside down. If you closely analyse the outcome of these endeavours, you will also conclude that the parents or guardians were lacking in sincerity during the course of their nurturing.

Sincerity also dictates that a person be vigilant of his own spiritual nurturing during the course of nurturing others. He should not consider himself superior to others. He should by no means be under the delusion that his reformation has reached a point of perfection and now he is in a position to attend to the improvement of others. Such an attitude is bound to wreak spiritual mayhem instead of improvement.

Together with sincerity before Allâh ﷻ, it is also vital to be sincere and honest to those in his charge. He should be devoted and sympathetic towards them. He should constantly be concerned about their safety (from all forms of calamity). This concern should be so clear that regardless of the severity of the tone, the child regards it as beneficial and he is convinced that his mentor is his well-wisher. Rasûlullâh ﷺ was so sincere and solicitous of his Sahâbah ؓ that every one of them was certain that Rasûlullâh ﷺ is extremely fond of him. He was not only concerned about the spiritual nurturing of the Muslims but he was also concerned about the guidance of his enemies. The following Hadîth is an indication of the degree of his anxiety for the reformation and guidance of his people:

Rasûlullâh ﷺ is reported to have said: "I can be likened to that person who lights a fire. When the fire illuminates everything around it, large numbers of moths and other insects attracted to fire come and plummet into it. Now this person prevents them from falling into the fire but they overwhelm him and dive in. This then is the likeness of you and me. I am restraining you from the fire but you insist of plunging into it." *[Sahîh Bukhârî vol.2 p.248]*

Where a person is sincere before Allâh ﷻ, whilst executing the obligations of nurturing and upbringing, he should also be an embodiment of solicitude and guidance for his children. Every action and statement should be gripped with passionate concern. Whilst counselling his children, his motive should be that Allâh ﷻ becomes pleased with him and his children.

"O Allâh! Let these words of advice be a source of guidance to my children. O Allâh! Divine guidance is in Your hands alone. These children's hearts are in Your absolute control. O Allâh! Steer their hearts towards Hidâyat (divine guidance)."

2. 'Ilm – Knowledge

Those charged with rearing the new generation should acquire as much 'Ilm as possible. They should study the philosophical and fundamental regulations of upbringing. They should explore the attributes required in a mentor and the things they should abstain from. They should also strive to cultivate the ability to assess the conditions, character, passions, temperament and psychology of the child. If possible, they should also study the research carried out on the subject of education and upbringing so that they may take advantage of contemporary thought and present day hands-on experience. Together with this, they should read the following books in particular. Occasionally, they may get others to read whilst they listen because sometimes it is more constructive to listen than to read.

No:	Book	Author
1	Tafsîr Ma'âriful Qur'ân	Muftî Muhammad Shafî رحمه الله
2	Ma'âriful Hadîth	Ml. Manzûr Nu'mânî رحمه الله
3	Jawâhirul Hadîth	Ml. Manzûr Nu'mânî رحمه الله
4	Hayâtus Sahâbah	Ml. Yûsuf Kândehlawî رحمه الله
5	Fadâil Â'mâl	Ml. Muhammad Zakariyyâ رحمه الله
6	Fadâil Sadaqât	Ml. Muhammad Zakariyyâ رحمه الله
7	Târikh-e-D'awat wa 'Azîmat	Ml. Abul-Hasan Nadwî رحمه الله
8	Islâm-wa-Tarbiyat-e-Awlâd	Ml. Habîbullâh Mukhtâr رحمه الله
9	Islâm-wa-Tarbiyat-e-Awlâd	Muftî 'Abdus-Salâm رحمه الله
10	Islâhî Khutubât	Muftî Taqî 'Uthmânî
11	Mazâhir-e-Haq Jadîd	Nawâb Qutbud-Dîn رحمه الله
12	Tohfa-e-Dulhan	(Recommended by) Muftî. Nizâmud-Dîn رحمه الله
13	Tarîqah-e-Wasiyyat	'Ulamâ of Madrsah Baitul-'Ilm
14	T'alîmul Islâm	Muftî Kifâyatullâh رحمه الله
15	Apnî Namâz Durust Kîjiye	Ml. Ashraf 'Alî Thânwî رحمه الله
16	Purâne Chirâgh	Ml. Abul Hasan Nadwî رحمه الله
17	Âp Betî	Ml. Muhammad Zakariyyâ رحمه الله
18	Hayâte-Tayyibah	Ml. 'Abdul-Qâdir Raipûrî رحمه الله
19	Ml. Muhammad Ilyâs Aur Un Kî Dînî D'awat	Ml. Abul-Hasan 'Ali Nadwî رحمه الله
20	M'arifate Ilâhî	Ml. 'Abdul Ghânî Phûlpûrî رحمه الله
21	Mere Wâlid Mere Shaikh Aur Un ke Mizajo Mazâq	Muftî Muhammad Taqî 'Uthmânî

22	Rahmatul-Lil 'Âlamîn	Ml. Ashraf 'Alî Thânwî
23	Ahkâm-e-Mayyit	Dr. 'Abdul Hay 'Ârifî
24	Uswa-e-Rasûle Akram ﷺ	Dr. 'Abdul Hay 'Ârifî
25	Sîrat Sayyid Ahmad Shahîd	Ml. Abul-Hasan Nadwî
26	Sîrat Ml. Muhammad 'Alî Mongerî	Sayyid Muhammad Thânî
27	Bîs Bare Musalmân	Ml. 'Abdur-Rashîd Arshad
28	Makhzane Akhlâq	Maulânâ. Rahmatullâh Subhânî

3. Tolerance and Patience

One of the paramount attributes of an ideal father is patience. Without tolerance, nobody will be able to execute an obligation as sensitive as upbringing. Those engaged in this colossal task should cultivate a genuine spirit of patience and tolerance within themselves.

The gist of tolerance is that a person refrains from angry outbursts over every petty issue. He should disregard trivial and inconsequential issues. Similarly, tolerance also entails that a person curbs his emotions from flaring up. Allâh ﷻ describes the characteristics of the believers in the Holy Qur'ân thus: "Those who suppress their rage and pardon (the indiscretions) of the people. And Allâh loves those who perform good deeds." *[Sûrah Âl-'Imrân verse 134]*

Similarly, a person should not be impulsively hasty in everything he does. He should carry out all his work with cool composure. If the results of his endeavours are not promptly apparent, there is no need to get keyed up with agitation. Don't fall prey to depression. Keep faith and courage and don't let up on your endeavours. It has been noticed that a number of people engaged in reforming others, tend to get frustrated when no apparent

transformation is visible in their charges. They subsequently abandon all efforts at reforming those under their care.

The results of upbringing take time to manifest themselves. Hence, it is improper to hope for a quick-fix solution or to be imprudently rash in such matters. Bad habits are eradicated very gradually whilst good habits develop progressively over a period of time. Everything takes time. So don't fall victim to despair but sustain your endeavours with patience and tolerance. The Holy Qur'ân says: "And he who exercises tolerance (over other people's viciousness) and forgives, this indeed, is an accomplishment of immense courage. (In other words, this is the best thing to do and it is also an exigency of resolute determination)." *[Ma'âriful Qur'ân vol.7 p.703-704]*

Upbringing is an incredibly trying task. Whilst fulfilling this important obligation, a person should adopt magnanimity. He should keep up his endeavours with steady uniformity. He should avoid taking a misguided step out of anger. He should exercise tolerance whenever he is confronted with something offensive to him. He should not lose courage in the face of numerous disappointments. A person is often faced with severe odds during this journey of upbringing but controlling oneself during these demanding times is certainly a matter of heroic valour.

Rasûlullâh ﷺ is reported to have said: "A strong man is not he who overwhelms his opponent in wrestling but a strong man is he who controls himself in moments of anger." *[Sahîh Bukhârî p. 903]*

Every mentor is required to vigilantly scrutinise the virtues as well as the shortcomings of their subordinates. Encourage their virtues and allow them to thrive whilst striving to eliminate their shortcomings with wisdom and tact. If you are finding it difficult to overcome any of their deficiencies, don't become disheartened but continue with your efforts with resolute determination.

Upbringing is an awfully trying responsibility. This is why the mentor is required to become a mountain of patience whilst administering his duties of upbringing. Undue hate and dejection could bring about an adverse reaction.

Bear in mind the blessed standard of Rasûlullâh ﷺ. Look at the difficulties and hurdles Rasûlullâh ﷺ faced whilst spiritually rearing his Sahâbah ﷺ. In the most trying of times, he was not a man to give in to dejection nor did he display any form of reckless haste.

Every Ustâd and father should memorise the poem of Zafar Shâh Dehlawî. In fact, he should hang it up on his wall so that his gaze may fall onto it again and again.

Zafar Shâh said:

"O Zafar! He will not be successful regardless of how intelligent he may be, he who does not remember Allâh ﷻ in comfort nor fears Allâh Ta'âlâ in anger."

4. Polite Speech

A person's speech, tone, manner of conversation and style of address undeniably leaves an impression upon his children. If the voice is sweet, polite and decorous the children will not be disgusted by it but it will prove more encouraging for them. On the other hand, if the voice is unsympathetic, repulsive and screeching, the children will find it rather disgusting to their ears. It will be a burden to their ears. Subsequently, the children will not only withdraw from such a person but will harbour a loathing for whatever he says. The greatest of mentors, Rasûlullâh ﷺ, used to speak in a tone that was neither too soft nor too loud but of a moderate tone. His voice was so sweet that his audience wouldn't be left without a striking impression.

Hadrat Umme M'abad *radiallâhû 'anhâ* very vividly describes Rasûlullâh's ﷺ manner of concise speech when she says:

"His words were neither redundant nor insufficient. He was neither tight-lipped nor garrulous. *[Sharh Shamâil Tirmidhî p.120]*

Refrain from idle talk and pointless discussions. Talking unnecessarily is detrimental to one's personality. A number of his weaknesses are exposed. Idle talk creates a host of unwarranted problems.

Children get exasperated with lengthy speeches and it becomes difficult for them to follow the actual objective. Similarly, the child will fail to grasp the objective or he won't be at ease if the whole picture is not laid before him or your message to him is unreasonably curt. As far as education, nurturing and inviting is concerned, a person's speech should be exceptionally gracious. Whilst abstaining from lengthy speeches, he should also not be so curt but he should speak as the moment requires. Come let us examine the manner of Rasûlullâh's ﷺ speech and let us endeavour to emulate his gracious manner.

"Rasûlullâh ﷺ would not engage in unproductive conversation. From the beginning to the end of his conversation he would speak clearly. (And not mumble the last few words of his sentence.) His speech was decisive. He would not touch on something irrelevant to the current conversation of the people in the gathering. He would fall in with their conversation. If he sensed the Sahâbah ﷺ becoming bored with his topic of conversation, he would move onto another topic. During the course of his speech, his attention would be directed to every single member of his audience.

None of them would feel that another person is getting more attention than I am. He would not turn his face away from his addressee until the addressee himself does not turn away. He would not interrupt anyone's conversation unless it was contrary to the truth. He would dislike talking about an important issue whilst standing. During his conversation

with the Sahâbah ﷺ, he would laugh with them and express his mirth and happiness. He would never utter a word of condemnation nor criticise someone specifically. He would not attempt to uncover the secrets of others. Whenever he turned his attention to someone, he would offer the person his undivided attention. He would never utter anything nasty. He would not screech whilst speaking. He would refrain himself and forbid others as well from futile speech. He would make a point of observing Salâm before speaking.

Rasûlullâh's ﷺ tone would fluctuate between a high pitch and a low tone as the need arose. His conversations contained no semblance of stilted formality nor were his words artificially pompous. His speech was simple and spontaneous. He maintained an appearance of a smile whilst speaking. If he was leaning and he had to emphasise a point, he would sit up and speak. He would repeat important issues again and again. He would make use of his hands and fingers to illustrate a point. On occasions of surprise, he would turn his palm outwards."

Every Muslim should endeavour to espouse the gracious manner of speech of Rasûlullâh ﷺ. Think about it; he had to bear the mantle of prophethood, he was besieged with problems and he had to put up with a multitude of calamities and disasters. But in spite of all his problems he spoke with such self-control and charisma that his speech would make an immediate impression upon the hearts of his audience. Normally, a person besieged by so many problems is bound to speak rather abruptly and touchily. Rasûlullâh ﷺ on the other hand always spoke sweetly with a smile. He was not known to speak in a pretentious manner.

Hadrat Zaid bin Thâbit ﷺ narrates: "Whenever we discussed worldly issues, Rasûlullâh ﷺ would join us and whenever we engaged in discussions of Dîn, he would also talk about it and when we touched on a subject of food and drink, he would also join us in discussion." *[Sharh Shamâil Tirmidhî p.23]*

So we should also adopt the unique manner of the speech of Rasûlullâh ﷺ during the course of rearing our children so that the pristine message is conveyed to the children and others in a pristine tongue.

5. Good Character

Before attempting to nurture his children, the ideal father should first spiritually nurture himself. In order to inculcate good within his children, he should inculcate good within himself first. In order to make his children renounce bad habits, he should desist from bad habits himself. A person's character is one of his most attractive features, which leaves a lasting impression on others. Character is likened to a silent messenger or mentor. The good character of Rasûlullâh ﷺ played a key role in rearing his Sahâbah ﷺ in the most brilliant manner.

If the actions and speech of the mentor are in constant conflict, all his efforts could be in vain. However, if his actions are consistent with his speech and he appreciates the value of good character, even his negligible efforts will bring about great results, Inshâ Allâh. Think about it; Rasûlullâh ﷺ initiated the work of *Tablîgh* and *Tarbiyat* all alone, when the world was in total spiritual darkness. In a short span of just twenty-three years, all of Arabia is conquered and his legend was celebrated in all of the non-Arab lands. What brought about this all-embracing transformation? It was Rasûlullâh's ﷺ exceptional character and his Allâh-conscious lifestyle. More than anything, people were most impressed with his character and they would then endeavour to mould themselves in the same cast.

People would set out to massacre him but would be so moved by his character that they would ultimately join his group as sincere *Dâ'is*. People seething with revenge would return with a peace treaty. A person wielding a sword against him turned out to become a person ready to sacrifice his life in his defence. His character transformed

adulterers and evildoers into embodiments of modesty and chastity. Chronic murderers and war-mongers turned out to become his bodyguards. When his enemies saw him making Du'â for those who abuse him, offering flowers to those who hurl stones at him and talking good about people at whose hands he suffered untold misery, they couldn't help but be deeply influenced by his faultless character.

The primary responsibility of people engaged in the obligation of *Islâh* and *Tarbiyat* is to lead a life of Allâh-consciousness. They should refrain from all forms of sin and also refrain from incompetence in their obligations. They should fulfil the rights of Allâh ﷻ as well as the rights of other humans. They should adopt Islâmic traditions and etiquette. If they lead their lives as devout servants, their efforts will no doubt prove fruitful.

We make Du'â unto Allâh ﷻ that He grants us the divine ability to rear ourselves and our dependants in the manner revealed to us by Rasûlullâh ﷺ. May He condone our deficiencies and accept our humble efforts. Âmîn.

Tarbiyat (Nurturing) by Illustration

In order to instil his words more strongly into the children's minds, the father should make extensive use of common examples that are visible to the child. This will enable the child to grasp more rapidly. He will be able to remember his father's words for the rest of his life and take benefit from them. In order to drive his point home or to further clarify his point, Rasûlullâh ﷺ would also occasionally make use of examples.

For instance, with the aim of portraying the difference between a good and evil companion, Rasûlullâh ﷺ once said: "The similitude of a good friend and a bad friend is like a musk merchant and a furnace-blower. The musk-merchant will either give you some musk or you will purchase some from him or at the very least his fragrance will continue

reaching you. The furnace-blower on the other hand will either burn your clothes or you will be subjected to his foul odours." *[Mishkât vol.2 p.426 narrated on the authority of Hadrat Abû Mûsâ ؓ]*

Think about it! Look at how brilliantly Rasûlullâh ﷺ explained the difference between a good friend and a bad friend. Every single person, city dweller or villager, ignorant or learned, everyone is able to understand this example.

Hadrat Maulânâ Ashraf 'Alî Thânwî *rahmatullâhi 'alaih* writes of an incident of a saint. The saint requested his son to give him an account every evening of what he did all day. The son was left in a dilemma. Firstly, he had to do everything with a great deal of forethought and secondly, he had to give a daily account to his father of what he did and why he did it. He tolerated this difficulty for a couple of days. One day, he said to his father: "Father! What is the use of this? Why don't you just advise me as we go along?" The father replied: "The wisdom behind this is to demonstrate to you that just as you are unable to account for all your deeds before your ageing father, how will you be able to account for all your actions before Allâh ﷻ who is the Knower of the unseen and who has absolute control over everything?" Subhânallâh! How splendidly he explained to his son. He probably didn't forget the thrust of this point right up to his death.

Similarly, there was another saint who brought his son up in the best possible manner. When the son grew up, he befriended a few uncouth elements. The father advised him to discontinue his relationship with them but the son countered: "Father! There is no need to worry. Their evil will not affect me in the least." The father didn't say anything and left him alone. A little while later, the father ordered a box of apples. The box contained a single rotten apple, which the son wanted to remove from the box. The father said: "Son, leave it alone. It's not so bad. We'll see later on." He then closed the box and packed it away. When he opened it a week later, he saw that a number of apples

around it were spoilt due to that single rotten apple. The father then addressed the son saying: "My beloved son! Did you see how a single rotten apple brought about decay to a number of other apples around it? This is the same with an immoral companion; he ruins those around him."

Explain your point with examples of this nature. This will ensure that your advice is not a burden on the children and it will enable them to grasp the point you are trying to make. For other examples of this nature study the books of our pious 'Ulamâ particularly the *Mawâ'iz* and *Malfûzât* (discourses) of Hakîmul-Ummah Hadrat Thânwî *rahmatullâhi 'alaih*. Also try and sit in the company of the senior 'Ulamâ. May Allâh Ta'âlâ assist us in our endeavours. Âmîn.

Provide all the Amenities but Keep a Vigilant Eye[2]

Don't allow the child to become so undaunted that he does as he pleases without any fear of reprisal from the father. Together with fatherly love and affection, you should also take a tough stance when the child is really guilty of a misdemeanour. You should sternly admonish the child. In fact, within limits, you may even adopt some disciplinary measures. You are authorised to do this. Occasionally, this is desirable. However, the intention should be the reformation of the child. Don't ever take action in anger because quite often an enraged person fails to distinguish between right and wrong. This is why the 'Ulamâ say: "When the child does something that infuriates you, don't even talk to the child at that moment. Change your appearance and drink some water. Thereafter perform two Rak'ât of Salâh and make Du'â for the child's reformation. After that you may admonish the child whilst feigning anger. At this moment, you will be in total control of your senses. So there is now no fear of you transgressing."

[2] The Urdu expression literally reads: "Feed them with morsels of gold but maintain the strict eye of a lion over them."

The Ideal Father

So adopt this method and keep a vigilant eye on the actions of the children. What is the eldest son doing? Is he performing all his Salâh with Jamâ'at at the Musjid? What are his friends like? Is the Hijâb of the elder daughter in order? Is there no deficiency on her part? Does she have any friends who are associated to immoral families or friends? Are you sure there are no romance novels and similar digests coming into the home? Is the younger son performing all his Salâh? Is his passion for cricket not preventing him from performing his Salâh? In school, does he associate with friends whose parents are apathetic to their upbringing? Are you certain that the younger daughter doesn't go to watch television at her friend's house? Is the younger son not caught up in the curse of video games? Is his teacher punishing him for failing to carry out his duties?

In such circumstances, the father should employ all his resources to protect his children becoming fuel for the fire of hell either by making Du'â or by advising them with love and compassion or by adopting suitable disciplinary measures or by visiting a spiritually conducive environment or by taking them to the lecture programmes of the pious 'Ulamâ. From the very beginning, keep a watchful eye on them so that they are not under the impression that father doesn't know what's happening or even if he does come to know, all he will do is just advise us or just let loose a few words of reproach. Impress upon them that if they are guilty of doing something wrong repeatedly they are in for stern punitive measures.

Don't be utterly over confident of your children's innocence. A person falls into deception when he is irrationally confident. You should monitor them secretly as well. The child should be well aware that you are watching his every move. Occasionally come home before your normal time. At times, go to the school or Madrasah. From time to time, keep a check on them by telephone. For fear of one of the seniors catching them, children tend to abstain from

mischief. Nonetheless, demonstrate to the child that you consider him to be innocent and pious because once the child falls from his parent's grace his self-esteem is dreadfully bruised and there is a fear of him being traumatised by this experience.

Tarbiyat (Nurturing) Garnished with Interesting Activities

In order to make their leisure time more valuable, occasionally make the children compete with one another with questions and answers. Give them a theme for this competition. If possible, include the children of the family and the children of the neighbourhood as well. For instance, a week earlier, you may hand out books on Salâh to them. Books like *Fadâil-e-Namâz, Namâz Kî Kitâb*, *Merî Namâz* etc. Give them a week to prepare. *The day they are free, get them all together and test them in the following manner: call up one child at a time and ask him to relate the benefits of performing Salâh. Give him a mark out of thirty-three. In the second round, ask him to describe the punishment for discarding Salâh or the detriment of missing out Salâh with Jamâ'at or with the first Takbîr. Give him a mark out of thirty-three. In the final round, ask him about some Masâil of Salâh. Ask him to describe the strategies of getting up for Fajr Salâh. Give him a mark out of thirty-three.* The total adds up to ninety-nine. Allocate a mark for cleanliness, nails, and hair. Finally, the child who achieves the first position, give him a religious or educational book or something worthwhile as a gift. This will inspire the children to compete with one another and it will also enable them to increase their Dînî knowledge. Remember, whatever you discuss with the children in this manner will not only improve their basic Islâmic knowledge, it will also encourage them to implement what they learn.

One of the main benefits of these contests is that instead of the children engaged in video games or breaking windows

whilst playing cricket on the streets or instead of them fighting with each other, their time will now be well spent. Their time will be utilised in a constructive and religious manner whilst also gaining Islâmic knowledge at the same time which will enable them to practically implement what they have learnt. This will also help create a model Islâmic society wherein every child will get the opportunity to better himself. Goodness will proliferate whilst evil will dissipate. Each child will be capable of disseminating this Dîn – a trait that forms the nucleus of Islâmic upbringing.

Make the Child Perform Salâtut-Taubah on Committing an Offence

If only the child develops the habit from childhood that he remorsefully admits his guilt and performs Wudû followed by Salâtut-Taubah and Du'â whenever he commits an offence, makes a mistake or hurts someone. If only this habit was found amongst us, all our problems would be resolved. Hereunder we mention a few benefits of Salâtut-Taubah.

The chief benefit is that from a very young age, the child will be able to distinguish between right and wrong, between good and bad, between permissible and prohibited, between Halâl and Harâm. In other words, he will cultivate a Dînî outlook.

Another benefit is that after every action, his attention will be focussed upon Allâh ﷻ. Is Allâh ﷻ pleased with this action or displeased? If He is pleased, I will express my gratitude and if He is displeased I will perform Salâh and seek His forgiveness. In other words, he will be mindful of Allâh ﷻ in all his daily activities. This cautiousness will prevent him from falling into vice. At the same time, it will be rather difficult for him to fall into the same sin after seeking Allâh's ﷻ forgiveness. In fact, he will strive to dissuade others also from falling into the same sin.

For instance, you spot the elder child grabbing hold of the younger child's sweet etc., which he promptly thrusts into his mouth and gobbles down in one go. Now, to begin with, attend to the younger child who is about to weep or howl. Sympathise with him: "Son! There's nothing to cry about. He is, after all, your elder brother. What's there if he took something belonging to you? He always thinks about you and he also gives you many things. Don't fret over it. He is nevertheless, your brother. If a friend takes something from you, won't you cheerfully surrender the item? This is your brother. He is more deserving than a friend." When this child calms down, take the elder child aside and discreetly advise him that what he did was unbecoming of him. Explain to him: "If you so desperately wanted the item, you could have asked me or you could have purchased it from the shop. Why did you have to snatch it from him? Snatching and grabbing is not a good habit. It is the habit of wild animals. I will give you some money. Go and purchase the item and give it to your brother and don't feel ashamed to apologise to him."

Advising him in this manner will make it clear to him that there is no getting away from fulfilling the rights of the rightful. This will also assist in making him a more reliable person in the future and it will also make him mindful of the divine rights of Allâh ﷻ and the rights of fellow humans. Finally ask the child to perform Wudû followed by two Rak'ât of Salâtut-Taubah. Advise the child: "Seek Allâh's ﷻ forgiveness for your actions. Make a firm resolution to refrain from such actions in the future. Allâh ﷻ is exceptionally merciful and compassionate. When His servant begs His forgiveness, He eagerly forgives him and He makes people love this servant. Inshâ Allâh, your brother's heart will be clean towards you."

Develop the Spirit of Selflessness within the Children

Children of various ages are found in the house and they are prone to fight with each other and they are just as quick to make up. However, at times their rivalries may turn out to be nasty. If unity, harmony and love is cultivated within them, they will remain close not only up to their youth but right up to their old age. How to develop this bond of affection? The most effective method is to cultivate the spirit of selflessness within them. In other words, even if I go hungry, my brother should be satiated. I will use the threadbare blanket but my brother should sleep comfortably with the thicker blanket. How can you cultivate this spirit? At least once a week, assemble all of them and enlighten them about this outstanding spirit of self-sacrifice. Remind them again and again about it. Inshâ Allâh, this will enable them to cultivate this spirit.

As long as we were united, we enjoyed superiority over others. Today, we need to set aside our hostile differences and we should strive to cultivate compassion and sympathy towards others. Why don't you start from the home? If every household enjoys a pleasant atmosphere of brotherhood, society at large will stand closer together in unity. If every heart embraces the spirit of selflessness every member of society will turn out to be a sympathetic soul. Similarly, the elders should fulfil the rights of their subordinates whilst the juniors should seek the counsel of their elders when planning to do something. When each and every person is prepared to fulfil the rights of others, everyone's rights will be adhered to and they will all enjoy the fruits of their endeavours in this very world.

The spirit of selflessness means that a person develops a determination within his heart that let alone my own personal desires, whether my own needs are attended to or not, the needs and desires of the other servants of Allâh ﷻ should be realized and attended to.

Quite often we see that most conflicts are sparked when an item can fulfil the needs or desires of one person and somebody else gets the item. Now, the person who failed to get the item is seized by the malady of jealousy and pursues all means, legal and otherwise - to get hold of that item. And the person who got the item also doesn't want to release his hold onto that item. He will also do everything permissible or objectionable to safeguard what he has. If the recipient cherished a spirit of giving and the deprived person a spirit of not taking, you can judge for yourself that the very basis of all disputes is put to rest.

From the early days of childhood, make every effort to develop within them the spirit of surrendering their rights. Advise each one of them individually and explain to them repeatedly the virtues of such a spirit. Together with this, make a lot of Du'â. Inshâ Allâh, if this is entrenched within their hearts, from their childhood days to youth and right up to their old age, you can be assured of their committed bond of brotherhood. And after their marriage, your family will be protected from the malicious family feuds surrounding property, inheritance etc. To this end, teach them some incidents of selflessness. Make them write out such incidents in their notebooks.

Hereunder we mention a few illustrative incidents:

1. *Imâm Tirmidhî* ﷺ *reports on the authority of* Hadrat *Abû Hurayrah* ؓ *that one night an unexpected* guest *turned up at an Ansârî's home. He had no* food *except a little for himself and his children.* He told his *wife: "Lull the children off to sleep* somehow. *Extinguish the lamp and place the food* before the *guest. You sit down and act as though you are* also *eating so that the guest can eat to his fill* without him *realizing that we are not partaking of the meal."*

2. Qushairî ﷺ writes that Ibnu 'Umar ؓ relates: "A man once presented a goat's head to one of the Sahâbah ؓ as a gift. The Sahâbî ؓ recalled that his brother who has a wife and children is more in need of it than him. He then sent it off to his brother. This person sent it off to another Sahâbî ؓ who was more needy than him. The third person sent it off to a fourth and he to a fifth and so forth until the head was sent to seven people. Finally the head came back to the Sahâbî ؓ who first received it as a gift.

3. It is stated in the Muattâ of Imâm Mâlik *rahmatullâhi 'alaih* that a poor man once came begging for something to eat from Hadrat 'Âishah *radiallâhû 'anhâ*. She only had a single Rotî in her house and she was also fasting that day. She asked her maid to hand over the Rotî to him. The maid said: "You won't have anything left for Iftâr this evening if you give this Rotî away." She replied: "It doesn't matter. Give it to him."

4. Huzaifah 'Adawî ؓ relates: "During the battle of Yarmûk, I set out in search of my cousin amongst the bodies of martyrs. I also took along some water with me with the belief that if he is still alive, I will make him drink some of it. As I reached him, he still had some life left in him. I asked him if he wanted a drink and he nodded in the affirmative. I was about to make him drink when I heard a groan of another martyr close by. My cousin motioned me to give it to him. As I reached this second person, I heard a groan of a third person and this second martyr gestured me to go to him. As I reached the third person, I heard a fourth person groaning. In this way, I went around to seven martyrs. As I reached the seventh martyr, he had just breathed his last. I then returned to my cousin and also found him to have already left this world." *[Extracted from Ma'âriful Qur'ân vol.4 p.375-377]*

Teach the Child the Proclamations of the Angels

There is no other age as impressionable as childhood for the productive nurturing of an individual. Whatever is placed in the child's mind at childhood has a tremendous bearing on his future personality. Hereunder we record a few proclamations of the angels as taught in some schools and Madâris. Such proclamations have proven to be remarkably beneficial to the children. We therefore request every father to teach his children the proclamations of the angels.

1. The person who performs his Fard Salâh with Jamâ'at and remains seated after the Salâm, an angel makes Du'â for him: "O Allâh! Forgive him and shower him with Your mercy." Quite often we see that children tend to scuttle to the courtyard of the Musjid as soon as the Salâh is over and they stand around chitchatting with their friends. Sometimes even their Sunan and Nawâfil are neglected. So when you take the child to the Musjid, impress upon him repeatedly: *"Son! After Salâm, remain seated for a little while and recite some Zikr etc. Then rise very calmly and move to another spot and perform your Sunan and Nawâfil. Thereafter you may engage in other activities. Remember that as long as you are seated in the row, the angels will continue making Du'â of forgiveness and mercy for you."*

2. *When you wish to send your son out of the house on an errand or you are sending him off to school or Madrasah, just as you as a parent offer other words of advice, also impress on him to leave the door with the right foot and recite the following Du'â:*

بِسْمِ اللهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ عَلَى اللهِ لَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ اِلَّا بِاللهِ

Draw his attention to the fact that when he recites this Du'â on leaving home, an angel proclaims: "This person has been divinely guided, all his (needs are)

taken care of, he is well protected and Shaytân is distanced from him." *[Tirmidhî vol.2 p.181]*

3. Give charity frequently at the hands of the child. This will develop within the child the spirit of giving others. Explain to the child that when a person gives charity for the pleasure of Allâh ﷻ, an angel proclaims: "O Allâh! Recompense the contributor in the most excellent manner." The advantage of this is that the child realises that charity does not diminish the wealth but Allâh ﷻ bestows the donor with something far superior than what he donates. And Rasûlullâh ﷺ declared: "The hand that gives is far better than the hand that takes." *[Sahîh Bukhârî, Kitâbuz-Zakât, Bâbul-Isti'fâf 'Anil-Mas'alah vol.1 p.199]* So become a donor rather than a beneficiary.

4. Rasûlullâh ﷺ is reported to have said: "When the time of Salâh sets in, an angel proclaims: "O children of Âdam! Rise and extinguish the fire of Jahannam that you have set ablaze (with your sins)." As a result, (the devoted) rise and perform Wudû and perform their Zuhr Salâh. Subsequently, their sins that they committed (from Fajr to Zuhr) are forgiven. The same happens at 'Asr, at Maghrib and at 'Ishâ. (In other words, this occurs at every Salâh time) *[Tabrânî vol.10 p.174, Targhîb p.235]*

Teach the children these angelic proclamations. Remind them whenever the Azân is called out and ask them: "What proclamation is the angel making now?" When he answers, ask him what we are required to do now. He will, Inshâ Allâh, respond by saying: "Father! Now we should perform our Salâh and postpone all our other work."

5. Continue encouraging your children to make Du'â for their siblings, parents, relatives, neighbours and

friends. Whatever good they desire for themselves, they should make Du'â for it in favour of the others and in favour of themselves as well. Explain to the child that when a person makes a Du'â for someone else, an angel responds to each of his Du'âs with the words: "And the same for you." In other words, O Allâh! Grant him the same favours. And Allâh ﷻ certainly grants him the same even if Allâh ﷻ does not grant it to the person in whose favour the Du'â was initially made. In the same way, if an evil Du'â was made against someone else, the Du'â may or may not affect him but the person who made the evil Du'â will certainly suffer the burden of the evil Du'â.

6. Every morning an angel calls out: "O son of Âdam! Today will certainly not come back to you. Whatever good you can perform today avail yourself of the opportunity." Teach the child the value and importance of time with this proclamation. Teach him the methods of saving time.

7. *When a person leaves this world, people ask how much wealth he left behind whilst the angels enquire how many good deeds he brought.* With this proclamation, teach the child the value of good deeds and how to protect them.

8. *As the sun rises, an angel calls out: "The house that is erected today will surely come down and the child that is born today will certainly die."* Endeavour to instil within the child the transitory nature of this world, the destruction of these buildings of brick and mortar, the establishment of Qiyâmah and the permanence of the hereafter.

9. *Each and every morning an angel proclaims: "O Allâh! Recompense those who spend their wealth in good works and destroy those who withhold their*

wealth." Cultivate within the child the spirit of spending. If he has two toys, encourage him to give away the other one to his cousin or someone else. If he has two pairs of new shoes, persuade him to give one pair away to the maid's, driver's or guard's child. Similarly, develop a loathing to hoard more than what they require and endeavour to make them as charitable as possible.

Teach the children these angelic proclamations and from time to time question them about the rationale behind the proclamation. What have they learnt? What is the moral behind it? What transformation ought to come about within our lives with these proclamations? Teach them this as well. Insha Allâh, this will help the child to expand his intellectual capabilities and these proclamations will take root within his life thereby enabling him to base his entire lifestyle on these principles.

Make them Memorise Sûrah Yâsîn

As mentioned previously, there are numerous worldly and spiritual advantages in making the children memorise the Holy Qur'ân. Here we have a few requests for those parents who, for some reason or the other, were unable to make their child a Hâfiz of the Holy Qur'ân. And in spite of their ardent desire to make the child a Hâfiz, they are faced with some predicament or the other.

The Holy Qur'ân in its entirety is the word of Allâh ﷻ. However, in terms of their virtues, some Sûrahs are more superior then others. The Ahâdîth make mention a number of virtues of some of these Sûrahs. For example, Sûrah Yâsîn, Sûrah Mulk, Sûrah Sajdah, Sûrah Wâqi'ah etc. So it is most appropriate that you make the child memorise all, if not at least some of these Sûrahs. Memorising these Sûrahs are not difficult and it will not affect any of his other duties.

At the same time, it will be a source of treasure for your hereafter.

Nonetheless, one point needs to be addressed here; before attempting to make the child memorise these Sûrahs, it is vital to cultivate a degree of enthusiasm, as this will enable him to apply himself more diligently and consistently when learning these Sûrahs. Periodically you should stimulate this enthusiasm. In order to achieve this, describe to the child the virtues and advantages of these Sûrahs as narrated in the Hadîth. At this point, we feel it most appropriate to briefly enumerate some of the virtues of Sûrah Yâsîn. For further details, one may refer to books like Ma'âriful Hadîth by Maulânâ Manzûr Nu'mânî *rahmatullâhi 'alaih* and At-Targhîb wat-Tarhîb (the Urdu version of which is Al-Bashîr wan-Nazîr, translated by Maulânâ Muhammad 'Uthmân Sâhib).

The Virtues of Sûrah Yâsîn

1. He who recites Sûrah Yâsîn, Allâh ﷻ will record the reward of the recitation of ten Qur'âns in his favour. *[Mishkât p.187]*
2. It appears in another Hadîth that Allâh ﷻ recited Sûrah Yâsîn a thousand years before the creation of the heavens and earth. *When the angels heard the recitation of this Sûrah, they exclaimed: "Glad tidings for the Ummah upon whom the Qur'ân is revealed and glad tiding to the hearts who will bear this." [Mishkât p.187]*
3. *It appears in a Hadîth that a person who recites Sûrah Yâsîn at the beginning of the day, Allâh ﷻ will attend to all his needs throughout the day. [Mishkât p.189]*
4. "He who recites Sûrah Yâsîn solely for the pleasure of Allâh ﷻ, *all his sins will be forgiven." [Mishkât p.189]*
5. Sûrah Yâsîn embraces a mound of goodness in this world as well as the hereafter for those who recite

the Sûrah. It also wards off the calamities of this world as well as the next and it deflects the horrors of the hereafter. [Fadâil-e-A'mâl p.263]

Apart from these virtues, the greatest virtue is that Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "It is my heart's desire that Sûrah Yâsîn be in the heart of every single *Ummatî*." [Fadâil-e-A'mâl p.263] In other words, every single Ummatî should memorise this Sûrah. If your beloved informs you that such and such thing is a profound desire of his heart, notwithstanding the complexity of the action, won't it be easier to carry out the task? Here, it is the heartfelt desire of our most beloved personality, Hadrat Muhammad Mustafâ ﷺ, that every single Muslim memorise Sûrah Yâsîn. In deference to his heartfelt wish and with the hope of pleasing him, how nice it would be if you memorise this Sûrah and make your children, grandchildren and others memorise this Sûrah as well.

Cultivate within every child the habit of reciting Sûrah Yâsîn after Fajr Salâh, Sûrah Wâqi'ah after Maghrib Salâh, Sûrah Mulk and at times Sûrah Sajdah after 'Ishâ Salâh and Sûrah Kahf on Fridays. Try and make all your children memorise Sûrahs Yâsîn, Mulk, Alif Lâm Mîm Sajdah, Kahf, Rahmân and Wâqi'ah.

Teach Your Children the Masnûn Du'âs

Daily recital of the sacred Du'âs recited by the blessed tongue of Rasûlullâh ﷺ on various occasions not only brings about spiritual comfort, mental solace and inner tranquillity but what's more, these Du'âs are favourable to our worldly lives and to our life in the hereafter. Recitation of these Du'âs with a basic understanding of their meaning is said to have an exceedingly productive effect on the reader's character and his social dealings. Consistent recitation of these Du'âs will cast the reader into an Islâmic mould and bring him closer day by day towards the *M'arifat* (recognition) of Allâh ﷻ. It would also nurture the love for

Rasûlullâh ﷺ. Don't ever regard these Du'âs as insignificant. If the children develop the habit of reciting the Du'âs of Rasûlullâh ﷺ on the various occasions, it would be a mark of good fortune for our forthcoming generations. Who are we in comparison to these Du'âs? It is the gracious favour of the Almighty for allowing us to say such Du'âs with our tongues.

Alhamdulillâh! The International Educational Research Board has published a book of 'Masnûn Du'âs for children'. Make the child memorise these Du'âs. Here we record some of these Masnûn Du'âs. Make the child memorise them and also explain the implication and commentary of the Du'âs.

Du'â on Awakening

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِىْ اَحْيَانَا بَعْدَ مَا اَمَاتَنَا وَاِلَيْهِ النُّشُوْرُ

All praises are due to Allâh Who has resurrected us (revived us) after putting us to death (to sleep). And to Him is our return.
[Bukhârî p.936, Abû Dâwûd p.340]

You may explain the significance of this Du'â thus: "Son! Sleep is also a great bounty of Allâh ﷻ. When you rise in the morning, you get up refreshed without the fatigue of the previous evening. So the Allâh Who has favoured us with the bounty of sleep and aroused us in good health is now commanding us to perform our Fajr Salâh. So after brushing with a Miswâk and performing Wudû, prepare for the Fajr Salâh. You should go to the Musjid and perform your Salâh with the first Takbîr so that you will be able to express your gratitude unto Allâh ﷻ in the true sense of the word. At the same time, you should resolve to do good on this day as Allâh ﷻ has awarded us another opportunity to perform good deeds."

Du'â on Leaving the Toilet

غُفْرَانَكَ اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِىْ اَذْهَبَ عَنِّىْ الْاَذٰى وَ عَافَانِىْ

O Allâh! I seek Your absolute forgiveness. All praises are due to Allâh alone Who has eliminated all filth from me and granted me comfort.
[Ibn Mâjah p.26]

What a remarkable and noble Du'â! If the children are taught the connotation of this Du'â, it may assist them in maintaining their moral character for the duration of their lives. This Du'â teaches us: express your gratitude unto Allâh ﷻ and praise Him profusely. What a marvellous system Allâh ﷻ has put into place; you consume something. It goes down easily into the stomach. It is then digested and a portion of it forms part of the body and it provides you with energy. How effortlessly the body then excretes the waste matter. If this waste matter is not excreted timeously, you can very well imagine what discomfort you would suffer. Then the word *'Ghufrânaka'* (we seek Your forgiveness) teaches us that just as the excretion of this physical filth is indispensable, so too it is imperative to eliminate the spiritual filth - like jealousy, lies, backbiting, discourtesy etc. - from within ourselves. One should not delay in eliminating this spiritual contamination.

If, Allâh forbid, one does commit a sin, he should swiftly repent and seek the forgiveness of Allâh ﷻ. He should be restless over his sins. He should be on edge for fear of committing a sin that may land him in agony either in this world or the hereafter. Just as a person feels comfortable after visiting the toilet, the pious people feel comfortable on making Taubah after committing a sin. So we should also endeavour to include ourselves in this noble assembly.

Du'â on retiring to bed

اَللّٰهُمَّ بِاسْمِكَ اَمُوْتُ وَ اَحْيَا

O Allâh! With Your name do I die (sleep) and with Your name do I live (awaken). *[Tirmidhî vol.2 p.179]*

Explain to the child: "Son! When you retire to bed, recite this Du'â and ponder over its meaning. Reflect over how you passed your day. Think about what good you have performed for today. Brood over the good deeds that you had postponed for the next day. What evil did you commit today? Who did you harass today? Did you hurt or disrespect anyone?"

"First of all, express gratitude unto Allâh ﷻ for affording you the opportunity of performing good deeds. And if you are guilty of committing evil, seek His forgiveness. If your sin is connected to human rights, seek their forgiveness as well. For instance, if you annoyed your parents, grandparents, siblings etc., apologise to them and seek their pardon. Also reflect whether you performed your 'Ishâ Salâh or not. Since you are retiring with the name of Allâh, it is only appropriate that you fulfil each and every one of His commandments. If you haven't performed your Salâh, as yet, get up right away, perfo m Wudû and your Salâh and then only get into bed."

We have only mentioned a few Du'âs and their commentaries. You may refer to other *Du'â Kitâbs* like *'Mustanad Majmû'ah Wazâif'* compiled by the teachers of Madrasah Baitul-'Ilm, *'Masnûn Du'âe'* compiled by Mufti 'Âshiq Ilâhî Sâhib, *'Masnûn Du'âe'*, vol. two and three compiled by the International Educational Research Board. Teach the children the Du'âs from these *Kitâbs* and explain to them the meaning and significance of these Du'âs.

Islâmic Etiquette of Education

Imparting the essential Dînî Masâil to his children is also the responsibility of the father. He should at least impart that degree of knowledge by which they are able to distinguish between Harâm and Halâl and they are able to worship Allâh ﷻ and fulfil the other basic fundamentals of Islâm.

The great magnitude that Islâm attaches to knowledge can be gauged from the fact that, according to the depiction of the Holy Qur'ân, the attribute which rendered Hadrat Âdam ﷺ eligible for the post of being a vicegerent on this earth in opposition to the angels and the attribute which qualified mankind for supremacy over other living beings on this earth was the attribute of knowledge which Allâh ﷻ bestowed upon Hadrat Âdam ﷺ. The first five verses of Sûrah 'Alaq also deals with Rasûlullâh ﷺ reciting and teaching with the pen in such a manner as though there is a profound connection between the creation of man from a mass of congealed blood and between his education. The purpose of the Almighty is to encourage man to read and to attain knowledge.

There are a multitude of texts in the Holy Qur'ân and Ahâdith that make mention of the significance, virtue and importance of learning and teaching. Muslims are instructed to acquire religious as well as secular knowledge by teaching and learning. They should not be neglectful of this as knowledge is crucial for the success of their worldly life and for the success of their life of the hereafter.

So give your children sound religious as well as secular education. Keep a watchful eye over their education. Also concern yourself with the education of the other Muslim children. Whatever capabilities Allâh ﷻ has bestowed upon you, spend it upon the success of the new generation. Assist the children of your poor friends or relatives who are financially unable to educate their children. Also continue

teaching the children the etiquette of acquiring knowledge as the adage proclaims: "A child of etiquette is a child of fortune." Also give your unstinting attention to your child's education. It shouldn't be such that after a few years of elementary schooling, you drive him into the shop or shove him into the job market. No, allow him to achieve as much as he can manage and allow him to tread in the path of knowledge as far as his legs will carry him.

Similarly, if you are bombarded with a salvo of complaints of your children, don't become despondent and take him out of school or Madrasah on the assumption that his mind is not focussed towards studying. It is better if you make a decision after consulting with others. You may explain to your teenage children thus: "Son! When a boy sends a marriage proposal, the girl's father will definitely ask how educated or qualified his prospective son-in-law is. Similarly, if you are seeking employment or you require a business visa for overseas travel, your mark sheet or report card or certificate will certainly come handy. So make sure that your report card is not blemished by poor grades or failure.

Son! If you endeavour to acquire a superior level of education, your nature will turn out to be of a superior level. Subsequently, all your work will be of a cut above the rest. In this present age, Muslims are in dire need of professional educators. Whether it is the religious or the secular field, you should be a professional in your field. Under qualified or unskilled people are 'a dime a dozen'. You should endeavour to be most proficient in whatever you do.

Listen son! The adage "he who applies himself will discover" sums it all up. Allâh ﷻ will not allow anyone's toil to go in vain. Today if you diligently apply yourself to your studies and form an intention to please Allâh ﷻ and to benefit Islâm and the Muslims, Allâh ﷻ will surely take work from you. Do your utmost to master the writing and speaking of the Arabic language. Also do all you can to master the English

language so that you can use this language to invite others towards Islâm wherever you are in the world."

So with due diligence coupled with Du'â go all-out to give your children the best education you can. In the field of education and *tarbiyat* (spiritual upbringing) do whatever you can for the Muslim children as this also falls within the purview of 'spending in the path of Allâh ﷻ'. If you are able to construct a good school or Madrasah for the children, go ahead as this also forms part of *Sadaqah Jâriyah* (perpetual charity). As along as the school or Madrasah operates, you will continue reaping the reward.

Playing the role of an ideal teacher, if you can develop the enthusiasm for learning and a zeal for studying within these young Muslim children, then go ahead. If your endeavours can yield a few professional 'Ulamâ and proficient scholars, it would be a source of perpetual reward for you.

Similarly, the father should teach his children the *Âdâb* (etiquette) of studying. And from time to time, he should question them about these etiquettes. Whilst sending them off to school, he should also remind them about observing these *Âdâb* of education.

A student should be exceptionally courteous and respectful to his teacher. He should approach him with utmost sincerity and affection. He should in no way be lacking in his admiration and respect towards his educator. His attention should not waver during the course of the lesson but it should be fully focused on the lesson. He should then painstakingly revise the lesson. He should conduct himself with a great deal of respect whenever he is in front of the teacher. He should speak to him with eyes cast downward in a very polite manner and gentle tone. If he needs to pose a question, he should do so in a very dignified manner. He should always be careful to abstain from doing something that would spark off his teacher. He should never feel shy or

hesitant to pose a question. He should not ask him something or pose objections that would unduly embarrass him. If the teacher is in need of financial assistance, the student should assist him in all sincerity and instead of regarding it as a favour upon the teacher, the student should rather consider it to be a favour of the teacher upon him since the teacher has given him the opportunity to serve him which in itself is a source of good fortune for the student. The more cordial the relationship between the teacher and student, the greater the chances of the student's success and the more beneficial will his knowledge be. Don't ever be too casual with the teacher. During the course of acquiring religious knowledge like the Holy Qur'ân, Hadîth, Fiqh (jurisprudence) etc. ensure that you are in the state of Wudû. Refrain from lies, backbiting, slander etc. as these maladies impair the memory and ruin one's knowledge ('Ilm). The primary objective of a student should be the pleasure of Allâh ﷻ. Expending all his capabilities on drawing mankind closer to Islâm should also be his key goal.

For the education of his children, it is the responsibility of the father to select a teacher who is familiar with the prophetic techniques of education as this will certainly elicit the proper Barakah (blessings) and effective impression of the education. He should be proficient in the field he is teaching. He should be well clued-up with the diverse methods of imparting knowledge. He should be a person who sincerely cherishes the welfare and interests of the child. He should be a person who treats his students like an affectionate father treats his children. He should be exceptionally tolerant and understanding. His attitude towards his students, especially towards the younger students, should be one of kind-heartedness and tenderness. He should not have an insensitive or ruthless personality. He should not be a teacher who flogs the children especially the younger ones over petty

misbehaviour or insignificant mistakes but he should be a person who advises them lovingly and affectionately.

Ruthlessly thrashing the child or insensitively reproaching the child over his misdemeanours may bring about some temporary results but the negative psychological impact such an attitude has on the child severely wrecks his personality and ruins his future prospects. Such an attitude of the Ustâd at times utterly deprives some people of acquiring any knowledge whatsoever. And these people in turn, publicly proclaim such deprivation to be the result of the Ustâd's ruthlessness and go about complaining about their fate. So, the teacher of religious studies should be extra cautious and ensure that his attitude does not trigger off such problems.

According to some *Mufassirîn*, the prohibitions of the second-last and third-last verses of Sûrah Duhâ also refer to the tactless approach of the teacher. Some of them are of the opinion that according to a stanza in Arabic, the word "Yatîm" (orphan) also refers to one who is deprived of knowledge and etiquette. Therefore, in the verse "Do not subjugate the orphan"; just as the word 'orphan' refers to a child who has lost his father, it also refers to a deprived student. Similarly, in the second verse, "and do not rebuff a beggar"; just as it refers to a beggar, it also refers to a student asking for knowledge. In short, these verses also contain advice to the teacher that he should refrain from cruelly subjugating or verbally abusing his students.

Hadrat Abû Hurayrah ؓ narrates that Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "Impart knowledge but do not maintain any form of ruthlessness. Bear in mind that one who imparts knowledge with kind-heartedness is far superior to one who does so with ruthlessness."

Similarly, Hadrat 'Umar ؓ advised both teacher and student with the following words: "Adopt humility before those

imparting knowledge to you and before those you are imparting knowledge to and do not be amongst the ruthlessly imposing 'Ulamâ." In other words, both the student and the teacher should adopt an approach of kindness with each other.

When to Commence Formal Education

Hadrat Sa'îd bin 'Âs narrates that Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "There is no gift a father can bestow upon his child more superior than good character and manners." [Tirmidhi vol.2 p.16]

All the Prophets of Allâh Ta'âlâ especially our beloved Rasûlullâh ﷺ advised us that it is the right of the children over the father that together with their physical upbringing, he also concerns himself with their religious and spiritual upbringing without any negligence on his part."

For this reason it is said: "It is the right of the child upon the father that he teaches him writing, swimming and archery and that he only feeds him Halâl."

Now the question as to when the formal education of the child should commence still remains. Although this issue depends on the individual background, country, family and health of each child, the parents should endeavour to start the child's education playfully even before the age of seven. Forcing the child into a system of formal education before this age may adversely affect the health of the child.

It is imperative to instil within the child a mind-set of Îmân and Yaqîn. Enlighten him with the virtues of righteous deeds. Adorn him with good character and outstanding morals. Teach him to recite the Holy Qur'ân correctly and if Allâh ﷻ endows the guidance, make him a Hâfiz. If you feel that the child is able to acquire secular knowledge without any difficulty and additional burden, admit him into a school

that does not pose a threat to his Îmân and morals. Also ensure that it is not a co-ed school.

Together with these strategies, also make Du'â and beg Allâh ﷻ to make these children sincere Muslims and to accept them for the services of His Dîn. Âmîn.

If the simultaneous pursuit of religious and secular education is gruelling for the child, postpone the secular education and continue with his religious education until the child can complete, with his Qur'ân Nâzrah, some basic Masâil of Salâh, Saum, Hajj, Zakât and some basic knowledge of his beliefs.

In his formative years, at least provide him with that much of knowledge that by the time he is nine years old he has some elementary acquaintance with the prominent Ambiyâ, the names of the famous angels, the names of the divine books and upon whom they were revealed, about life and death, the punishment of the grave, the advent of the final day, the day of judgement, the day of reckoning, paradise, hell etc.

Together with this, nurture them morally as well. For this you may study Hayâtus-Sahâbah by Maulânâ Muhammad Yusuf Kandehlawî *rahmatullâhi 'alaih* and Hikâyât-e-Sahâbah and Fadâil Sadaqât by Maulânâ Muhammad Zakariyyâ Sâhib *rahmatullâhi 'alaih*. Study these books and relate their contents to the children in your own words. You may also read these books to them and encourage them to read them on their own as well.

If you wish to make the child a Hâfiz, first try and make him recite the whole Qur'ân by looking inside. He should at least complete five *Pâras* (parts) with the proper Tajwîd etc. by looking inside and then attempt to do Hifz.

Together with his Qur'ânic lessons, make him attend school as well. Select a school that has an Islâmic environment. Since his writing skills, use of the pen etc, will act as foundation, after a year or two of schooling, start him off with Hifz. After he completes his Hifz, admit him into an Islâmic school. Once he matriculates, make Du'â together with some effort and encourage him to become an 'Âlim. However, don't impose on him to become an 'Âlim. Yes, encourage him to make the pleasure of Allâh ﷻ and His Rasûl ﷺ his main priority regardless of the field he decides to get into.

Similarly, teach the children the Masnûn Du'âs of the various occasions. On the occasion of the Du'â, make him recite the Du'â for that particular occasion as this will develop a habit and enable them to remember the Du'âs as well. May Allâh ﷻ make our children sincere Muslims and inviters unto His Dîn. Âmîn.

Education within the Home

The religious education and nurturing of the children is a cardinal obligation of the parents. Other individuals and institutions may be able to assist them in rightfully discharging this obligation but they can neither stand in for the parents nor can the children be independent of their parents. This is why attributes such as sympathy, selflessness, love, affection, forbearance and other such complimentary attributes are essential in a successful mentor. And these attributes are found flawlessly only in a parent.

Even within the home environment, you are obliged to provide the children with an educational system that further enhances their school or Madrasah education and an atmosphere that boosts their spirit of learning and teaches them the value of time. In view of this spirit, we mention a few points hereunder to facilitate this domestic system of

education. You may implement this methodology within your home and if you come across any better ideas, you are most welcome to enlighten us. We divide this methodology into five sub-headings:

1. Systematic Order:

In other words, within the home environment, establish a system for your children as a good school or Madrasah does. For example, separating them into age groups, keeping an attendance register, a set syllabus, monthly tests, half yearly and annual examinations etc. You may also appoint their mother to supervise them provided she herself is a bit educated. You should also keep an eye on them. Set aside two hours daily for their education. Within this allocated time, both of you should fulfil your obligations as though you are teachers. If you have to leave town for a few days or you are going out in the path of Allâh ﷻ for a *Chillah* or two, stress on her to carry out your duties as your deputy in your absence.

Also, deliberate whether you have nurtured in them the habit of doing everything diligently and meticulously. Yes, doing everything without any form of deficiency is solely within the authority of Allâh ﷻ alone. Only He carries out everything with faultless precision. Man on the other hand is an embodiment of deficiency. His work is also teeming with flaws. In spite of this simple reality, man is required to do whatever he does with meticulous care in a manner that equitably fulfils the right of the task. He should endeavour to complete the task appropriately and ensure that the task itself is productive.

On the contrary, a task that is carried out haphazardly or it is done ostentatiously or sloppily is bound to end up in a muddle of deficiency. It won't be worth exhibiting. After all who wants his deficiencies to be out in the open? Such work is well buried or altogether avoided or may even be dumped onto others.

Another negative angle to this slothfulness is that when any task is carried out with nonchalance, a number of other people's rights are encroached upon. If you employ a labourer and he betrays your trust by working dishonestly, would you be delighted with this? Will you reward him for it? Let us take the case of your office. All your routine office work is not up to schedule. A lot of shady deals take place behind your back. Important files are gone missing or mislaid. Baseless allegations are hurled against you. With such chaos within your office, wouldn't your blood boil? Of course it would. This turmoil will then give rise to bribery and corruption, which subsequently leads to social disorder, anarchy and lawlessness.
Whatever you do, do it with diligence, sincerity and dedication. And pin your hopes on Allâh ﷻ for a reward. You will be regarded as a *Muhsin* (a benefactor of the human race). Allâh ﷻ will love you and you will also be dear to all of mankind. This is a triumph over triumph.

The cultivation of a spirit of *Ihsân* (beneficence) is most effective in the formative years of the child. This is the age of 'make or break'. If the love and obedience of Allâh ﷻ is not fostered within the child, he will be more inclined to sinful deeds because the life of sin is exceptionally appealing. The only person who can refrain from sin is he who either loves Allâh ﷻ or fears Him.

Even in everyday simple tasks, train them to carry out their chores with diligence and dedication. If an elder asks for water, carry out this simple task with pleasure and enthusiasm. The school homework should also be completed enthusiastically. They should clean their own shoes, make their own beds and personally attend to their clothing etc.

A point that cannot be understated is that the parent should ensure that the child does not leave any task undone. Completion of a task is vital though it is toilsome indeed. Just as it is challenging to conquer a territory by

despatching troops, it is also challenging to withdraw the troops. A great deal of planning is called for when withdrawing troops from a subjugated territory.

Athletes taking part in the sporting activities offered by good schools and Madrasahs are trained to participate right up to the very end enthusiastically and courageously. Participants of the hundred-metre race are trained not for a hundred metres but for perhaps one hundred and ten metres. In developed countries, workers use the last ten minutes or so of their shift to round up the days work. During this time, they clean up their equipment, place their tools in order, tidy themselves up and then they leave the workplace with cautious discipline. On the contrary, untrained labourers and undisciplined artisans dash off the moment their shift ends. They will leave wet cement lying on the street and their tools thrown about helter-skelter. Is this how they expect to prosper?

When our child plays cricket and he's had his fill of the sport, if he is not disciplined, he's bound to chuck his bat and ball out in the open where they will be exposed to the elements. Now when he wishes to play again, he has to hunt for his playthings. Even if he does get hold of them, he now finds them useless and discards them altogether. When he is off to school he rummages around for his shoes. At this time, he is also concerned about his homework. Such detrimental habits tend to become more deep-seated particularly in childhood.

It is the duty of the father to employ tact and wisdom and explain to the child. For instance: "Son! If you replace your sports gear in its fixed place after playing, you won't have to go around rummaging everywhere looking for your gear. You will be able to locate it whenever you want otherwise you will have to hunt for it. The same applies to your personal items like your shoes, books, stationery etc. If you keep them away properly, you won't have a problem when

leaving for school. If you complete your homework the previous night, you won't be subject to the teacher's reproach the next day in school. The teacher as well as your classmates will be happy with you. If you fail to complete your homework or you went off to school unprepared, you will be reprimanded in front of the whole class. And you can very well imagine how embarrassing this can be."

Explain to the child in this manner. If the father himself puts everything in its proper place, he will be setting an example to his children. His actions will turn out to be a form of encouragement for them. The father should ensure that he leads an organised life and puts his personal items like his pen, diary, keys etc. in their proper places. This will enable him to locate the item the moment he requires it.

Don't underestimate the bad habits of the child. If the child's bad habits are overlooked now and his correct upbringing was neglected, he may have to bear the tarnish of this shortcoming in the future.

2. **Syllabus:**

According to the age and ability of the child, prepare a monthly curriculum for each child. In other words, moderately allocate a few pages or lessons from a few books for the monthly programme. Thereafter both of you should work towards completing this quota. Take into account the average monthly pace and set the curriculum accordingly. Continue with this programme on a month-to-month basis.

3. ***Educational Tools:***

Adopt the three basic tools of teaching; written, oral and practical. The Holy Qur'ân, Urdû etc. will be taught from the book. The Sîrah of Rasûlullâh ﷺ, Masnûn Du'âs and stories on ethics should be taught orally and the children made to memorise these things. Wudû, Salâh etc. should be demonstrated practically to the children. When they are able

to grasp the Masâil of Salâh, teach the girls 'Bahishtî Zewar' and the boys 'Ta'lîmul Islâm'. Whilst teaching from the kitâbs, do little at a time and drive it home instead of attempting to do a great deal at one go.

Similarly, teach them a few words of the Du'âs at a time. When they learn the entire Du'â, impress upon them to recite the Du'âs on the appropriate occasion. Also remind them to recite these Du'âs whenever the occasion requires it. You should also observe these Du'âs before them. For instance, when retiring to bed at night, recite the word 'Allâhumma' aloud. Insha Allâh, the children will complete the rest of the Du'â. Recite Sûrah Fâtihah and the 'four Quls' and pass your hands over your body. This will be a practical form of education for them. Similarly, brush your teeth before sleeping and they will also join you in brushing up. Upon awakening, make Salâm to them first and then say 'Alhamdulillâh.......', the children will complete the rest of the Du'â. Adopt this stance on the other occasions of Du'â as well.

4. **Writing:**

Once the child becomes somewhat competent in writing, daily make him write out a verse of the Holy Qur'ân with the translation from Ma'âriful Qur'ân. On one hand this will cultivate an attachment to the Holy Qur'ân whilst on the other hand, the child will perfect his writing skills. He will get some practice in Arabic and Urdu calligraphy as well. As time goes on, you may increase it to two or three verses depending on the ability of the child. For this you ought to put up a board in the child's rooms. Also try and develop his mathematical and accounting skills. Make him write down matters pertaining to general knowledge and historical facts. 'Târîkh-e-Millat' is an excellent book. Try and get a copy. Similarly, you may even make them write notes from 'Jahân Dîdah' - a travel chronicle compiled by Muftî Muhammad Taqî 'Uthmânî Sâhib.

5. Daily Report Back:

Children, who are able to write, get them to diarise their daily educational progress. Those who are unable to write should make a verbal report. If the child is lacking in his academic progress, you and the wife should ensure that you address the problem. In today's time, lessons are held for a mere seven months of the year at school. If the parents value the remaining five months of the year, not only will the children increase their knowledge but also the new generation will learn the value of time. The children are off for two days a week. Why don't you make the weekend more beneficial to them? Put the three months holidays a year to some productive use. For instance, for the coming year devise a programme to make the children memorise Sûrah Yâsîn with Tajwîd followed by Sûrahs Kahf, Rahmân and Mulk with their translations.

Put up a blackboard in the children's room. Get each child a separate desk in which they can keep their books, pens and other stationery products safely. Once the children reach their teens, provide them with biographies of our leading 'Ulamâ. And ask them to write out a summary of what they read. After a few months, allow them to compete with one another. You may ask them: "Who will write out a summary of this book? Who can write down ten pages on the life of Maulânâ Ashraf 'Alî Thânwî *rahmatullâhi 'alaih*? Who can deliver a half hour lecture on the life of Maulânâ Muhammad Ilyâs Sâhib *rahmatullâhi 'alaih*? Who will recite the forty poems of 'Allâmah Iqbâl?"

6. Examinations and Prizes:

At least once a month, take a written and oral examination. If the child does well, encourage him with a prize.

The Possibility of Improving the Child's Abilities

Every parent strives to ensure that his child is the most proficient and intelligent child. For this, the parent will have

to rear the child correctly right from the very beginning of the child's life. The parents should do whatever they can for the mental development of the child. Start off by narrating stories to them. As they grow, purchase educational toys for them. As they grow older, take them to the local library. The end result of these exercises is that it makes the child ready for school and facilitates the various educational phases of the child's life. Inshâ Allâh, you will see the rewards for your endeavours in this world as well as the next. Âmîn.

Subsequently, the child will employ his own experiences to enhance his intellectual skills and he will strive to ascertain what is happening around him. Every child instinctively wishes to explore the mysterious unknown.

There is no need for you to force the child to improve this yearning. This craving to explore is instinctive. In fact, when the baby is lying down in his cradle, he tries to look all around him and takes delight from the sights around him. Small children are extremely curious and in order to appease their curiosity they touch, taste or snatch whatever they can. The parents can assist the child in developing this curiosity. For instance, they can hand over a rattle or any other toy to the child. If the child is a bit understanding, you could perhaps talk to the child about the toy. You could even play with the child. There is absolutely nothing wrong in becoming a child for a little while. From an early age, if you teach the child colours, shapes and other such basics, it will make his life much easier in the future. This recognition of shapes etc. will assist him in developing his future academic talent.

The unremitting attention you shower upon the child will not necessarily turn him into an 'Âlim, Muftî, doctor or engineer but your unwavering exertions would surely act as a backbone for his intelligence, guidance and morals and he will, Inshâ Allâh, turn out to be a successful human being.

Similarly, make sure you scrutinise his certificate or report card. The child should have some form of concern for a good report. He should dread his father's wrath even if he fails a single subject. Keep a copy of his progress sheet on your desk and keep one on his desk as well. Identify his weaknesses and encourage him to perform better. Show him; this is how you performed in this grade. You should perform better in the next grade. This is how much you memorised this month. Try to increase it next month. Similarly, describe to him the importance of B. Com, graduation certificate, diploma etc. Advise him: "This certificate, in terms of external mediums, is an indication of a bright future. When you send a marriage proposal, the girl's father will want to know what field you excel in. Do you have a B. Com., BSC, MA? When you apply for a job, your prospective employer will also want to know. Put in a bit of effort now and the rest will be easy sailing. Leaving aside your marriage and employment prospects, a good report, son, is proof of one's good fortune".

Similarly, allocate a file for each child. File away all important documents like his school and Madrasah reports, certificates, awards, medical reports, blood group, eye-test report, birth certificate and other important dates. For instance, make a note of the date he was admitted to school or Madrasah, when he started and completed Hifz, when he completed matric, when he started the 'Âlim course, when he qualified. Also, record when they turned *Sâhib-e-Nisâb* - i.e. when the compulsion of Zakât comes into effect. The day (the mature children) become owners of Zakâtable wealth to the value of 52 ½ *Tolas* of silver, Zakât is payable on the same day next year. The compulsion of Hajj and Qurbânî etc. may also come into effect. So keep record of all these important dates.

Sweet and Kind Words

Always give the child the impression that he is a good boy or girl. This will, Inshâ Allâh, make him strive to better himself and to develop good habits. Allâh ﷻ forbid, if you relentlessly criticise him: "You are a useless, worthless, doomed to failure, you can't do anything properly, you are obstinate, immoral and wicked" etc., etc., the child will then try to become like that. He will feel that since he is not admired for anything and since his family members and other seniors look down upon him with disdain, why don't I just do what my heart desires? The child will subsequently do whatever he wishes to do. Therefore, commend the child upon doing something good and keep his spirits high. In this regard, we narrate a true incident of a teacher and his student to demonstrate what a few sweet and kind words can do to the progress of the child.

There was practically no relationship between young Salmân and Master Sher Muhammad. They didn't even see one another. How could they? Master Sher Muhammad had passed away a few years before young Salmân was born. However, through me, both of them enjoyed an imperceptible relationship. Twenty-five years ago, Master Sher Muhammad was my form teacher in grade four. Years later, when I qualified as a teacher and started teaching children in grade two in one of the local primary schools, young Salmân was also one of my students of this class. Master Sher Muhammad was my teacher whilst young Salmân was my student. Nonetheless, in spite of the number of years separating them, I will never forget the lesson I have learnt from both of them.

Young Salmân was a plump and healthy child from an average household. He was bright but extremely naughty. Initially, his mischievousness was innocent and harmless but as time went on, his mischievousness turned out to be a bit hazardous to some people to such an extent that his

behaviour became a problem to me. My advice and reproach fell onto deaf ears but I somehow put up with his unruly behaviour. However, one day he went overboard and he deliberately broke a flower-vase. He also used a stick to bring down a picture stuck to the wall. When the buzzer sounded for break and the learners started leaving the classroom, he slammed the door so hard that his classmate, Jamîl's finger got caught in the door leaving the poor child screaming in pain. Salmân's misdemeanours really put me on edge on that day. I failed to control my fury any longer. I grabbed him and shook him up. "Salmân!" I yelled. "You are a very wicked child. All day you have been misbehaving!"

Young Salmân had been on the receiving end of my chastisement on a number of occasions but he had never seen me so furious before this. Stealing a glance in my direction, he became extremely terrified. He drew his eyes wide in alarm. His young body started trembling in terror and he started weeping. He placed his small hands over his face and sobbed: "Sir! I know I am an evil boy but sometimes I do good as well. It's just that nobody sees me at that time." He then walked softly out of the room. The other pupils had already left by then. None of them would wait for young Salmân as he had no friends.

Young Salmân's behaviour left me all shaken up. I slumped onto a chair and holding my head in my hands, I lost myself in deep thought. I always questioned myself about my conduct with young Salmân. After some time, I recalled an incident that took place when I was a student in the fourth grade of a redbrick school in my hometown. It was just after the class was dismissed and all the other students had left for home. I was sitting alone at my desk with my elderly teacher Master Sher Muhammad sitting nearby. I was panic-struck with my heart in my mouth because of what I did that morning. Master Sher Muhammad found a Rupee note lying on the field during the break. The moment he picked it

up, before the others could get wind of it, I shouted: "Sir! The note belongs to me."

Why did I do this? Perhaps because my parents were poor and they couldn't afford to provide pocket money. Everyday I would longingly look at the other pupils buying ice creams and sweets but I would turn away on finding my pockets empty. Anyway, Master Sher Muhammad handed the note to me and I promptly thrust it into my pocket.

However, I felt as though the note is about to hop out of my pocket and scream: "You spoke a lie! You are a liar!" I don't belong to you." I considered tossing the note out of my pocket and admitting my folly before Master Sher Muhammad. However, the presence of other children dampened my courage. When classes resumed after the break, my nerves were stretched taut with anxiety. When the buzzer for dismissal sounded, Master Sher Muhammad indicated that I stay behind. I remained seated at my desk whilst all the other children had left for home. Now when Master Sahib raised his eyes in my direction, I saw that they were brimming with a gleam of affection. Very sympathetically, he asked: "What's wrong? Son! You look very terrified?" I couldn't hold on any longer. The tears welled up in my eyes and I started weeping profusely. With a tremble in my voice, I submitted: "Sir! The note didn't belong to me. I spoke a lie and acquired it from you. I wonder why? Perhaps because I am an awful boy. A very awful boy indeed..."

Master Sher Muhammad very compassionately passed his hand over my head and said: "No! No! Why do you consider yourself an awful child? Whatever you did was unbecoming. Don't repeat this in future. You are a very honest and sincere boy but never an awful child. Always remember this.'

May Allâh ﷻ shower His mercy upon Master Sher Muhammad. His affectionate conduct chalked out my direction of life. He didn't mention this incident to a soul; neither my parents nor to anyone else. However, he started paying more attention towards me. Whenever I got good marks or I performed well, he would congratulate me and boost my courage. Occasionally he would reward me with cash prizes. From then on, I didn't do anything so foolish. I put all my heart into my studies and always attained a high position in class.

If Master Sher Muhammad punished me on that day or if he declared me a thief or a deceitful child, I would have perhaps been such a person today. Then my train of thoughts turned to young Salmân. His terrified face before my eyes! Goodness me! A child is starving for a few kind and sweet words. Although I didn't call him a bad boy before this, I however reprimanded him a number of times in front of the other kids. He was true in his assertion that nobody looks at the good he does. Nobody encouraged him in his good actions. Just last week, he picked up a terrified kitten and holding it close to his chest he brought it into the classroom. In an incensed tone I asked: "What is this?" He nervously replied: "The poor thing was running about on the road. For fear of it being run over by a car, I brought it inside."

At that moment young Salmân was very frantic over his kitten. His action indicated his sincerity of heart. He needed to be applauded for his warmth but what did I do? I yelled: "Go and place the kitten in the office and wash your hands and return to the classroom as soon as possible."

On a few occasions I even saw young Salmân dusting his muddy shoes before entering the classroom. One day I saw him hand over all his pocket money to a crippled beggar. Quite often, I saw him closing the classroom door very gently. So did I ever congratulate him on any of these

occasions? Did I ever applaud him with a few kind and sweet words? The answer is in the negative.

The next day, I called young Salmân. I light-heartedly tapped him on his back and said: "Salmân! Yesterday I called you a bad boy. Son! I am sorry. This was wrong of me. You are not a bad boy even if you sometimes tend to become a bit mischievous. I also saw you doing deeds. For instance, the other day I saw your younger brother fighting for your sweet. I noticed that you gave him the whole sweet. Similarly, last year I observed that you produced some good results. Also I noticed that you had full attendance in August. Son! You really are a good boy. Keep up all the good work!"

On listening to me, young Salmân's face lit up with joy and he said: "Sir! I will always strive to do good." Thereafter, I mostly found young Salmân well behaved. On those rare occasions when his mischievousness got the better of him, I would instantly recall Master Sher Muhammad. I would then take him aside and advise him with love and affection. Whenever I see him doing well, I applaud him either with a few sweet words or with a smile or by shaking his hands. This conduct brought about a drastic change in young Salmân. He eventually relinquished his detrimental habits.

In a few years, young Salmân became renown for his diligence and graciousness. He even excelled in the field of athletics. The day he passed his matric with a distinction, my joy knew no limits. After all, a few sweet words from the teacher certainly brings about a positive change.

A Smile - A Ray of Light in Darkness

A smile is a symbol of life. A smile is like a ray of light penetrating the gloom of life. A smile is an expression conveying intimacy with life. Although a smile seems insignificant, it promises inestimable riches. A smile is a

form of tranquillity that enhances the beauty of life and enlivens the moments of the day. A smile dispels glooms and substitutes it with love. A smile is a credible indication that the person smiling is free of malice. A smile offers a veil to every type of anguish and conceals the agony behind its veil. It does not expose the vicissitudes of life. A smile conveys a message of joy within the dismal moments of life. In other words, it appears as a ray of light within the gloom.

A smile offers some courage of life. A smile is absolutely free. It does not require any gifts or cash and it is free of any form of greed. It is a gift both rich and poor can very well afford. A sincere smile provides an uncontaminated friend. A smile is like an outfit that looks pleasant on everyone. It enhances the dignity of the face. In today's time when a person is unable to express the highs and lows of life to everyone, a smile absorbs the ebb and flow of life and provides tranquillity to the face. The impact of a word delivered with a smile is long lasting. A smile conquers the hearts and it wins over the most vicious enemy. A smile has the ability to turn the most inflexible of hearts to wax. It makes circumstances a bit more pleasant for us. It is like a flower providing long-lasting fragrance. A smile turns the face into a brilliant moon and it is a reflection of the purity of the heart. A smile is like a precious gem illuminating the dreariness of life. A smile is like a friend lending a hand in times of distress. A smile offers hope and the courage of life. A smile is like a glittering star on a dark night; it provides light and direction. On close scrutiny, a smile provides us with untold riches. In today's unsafe society, a smile can be exploited to promote feelings of love and it can replace the gloom of society with security and peace.

Recognise Your Status

Allâh ﷻ has made you a father. This is a great favour of Allâh ﷻ. The right of this favour is that you assist your son in all his requirements and problems. You should boost his

courage. Assist him in building up a spiritual bond with Allâh ﷻ. Make him feel that he is not a forlorn orphan; his father is around to take care of him. If, Allâh ﷻ forbid, you are poverty-stricken, make clear to the child that in tough times money doesn't solve any problem. Allâh ﷻ alone solves all problems. Convince him to make Du'â whenever he has a problem. Make Du'â to build the firm conviction that Allâh ﷻ alone eradicates all difficulties. Allâh ﷻ alone replaces illness with health. The intention of Allâh ﷻ is sufficient to bring anything into existence. Whenever He wants, however He wants, from wherever He wants and with whosoever He wants, Allâh ﷻ will solve the problem. He has absolute authority.

Since Allâh ﷻ has absolute authority over every issue and since He alone transforms difficulties to ease and makes the impossible possible, what is your responsibility as a father? Come we will show you. Before reading any further, and if possible perform Wudû followed by two Rak'ats of Nafl Salâh and make Du'â: "O Allâh! Grant me the understanding of Dîn. As a father, give me the ability to fulfil my rights in rearing my children."

Bear in mind that in order to make the child's life, the father has to be extremely patient during the course of raising his children. If you are bothered by any of his actions, don't fall prey to an angry outburst and lose control like some women do. Control your emotions. Bear in mind your responsibilities. Ponder over the incidents dealing with the forbearance of the Ambiyâ عليهم السلام. Look at the scale of the love, sympathy and profound sincerity the guardians of this Ummah cherished during the course of reforming this Ummah. Ask the reformers of the Ummah what a gruelling task tarbiyat is. *Tarbiyat* entails sympathy, welfare, advice, patience and love. If someone asks, "What is the most demanding job in this world?" The answer is: "*Tarbiyat* (guardianship)." *Tarbiyat* entails breaking your head,

whittling down your skin to the bones and wringing out the marrow from your bones. The components of Tarbiyat are self-control, generosity of spirit, forbearance, self-restraint, soundness of mind and spirit and profound earnestness all blended with a smile.

A *murabbî* (guardian) is never narrow-minded. He is not a spiritless coward. He is neither ill tempered nor malicious. He is not short-sighted nor is he a status-hunter. A guardian has to conduct himself as though he is on *Pul Sirât* every moment of the day. A bit of negligence or immoderation is bound to make him susceptible to erratic behaviour and hurl him a long way off his objectives. A father should be much more sincere and sympathetic than others and his sentiments should be constantly focused on the well-being of the child. He should stay as far away from a caustic tongue and nasty temperament as the east is from the west. An ideal father does not reach his goal without incident as though he is flying uninterrupted through space. His pathway is strewn with thorns and stones. On the most rocky trails of fatherhood, an ideal father is not overcome by the huge boulders strewn on his path. He merely changes his direction slightly and continues.

Remember, in order to turn an unruly child into a polite child, there is no need to condemn or humiliate the child. He is not to be disgraced before his other siblings. He is not to be disheartened. He is not to be a target of verbal assault. He is not to be spoken ill of in society. He should be advised with affection. A spirit of aversion towards evil should be entrenched within his heart and soul. At an opportune moment, his mind should be moulded with wisdom and love. At the dead of night, heartfelt Du'âs are to be made for him. Du'âs are to be made for him after every Fard Salâh. He should also be advised through his friends. During his formative years, he should be encouraged to choose good friends and favourable company. He must be protected from evil company just as he is protected from snakes and lions.

The concern for his spiritual well-being should be the same as the concern for his physical well-being. His time should be managed just as one manages his hard-earned money. His leisure time must be closely watched.

Remember! The ideal father will be well compensated on the Day of judgement for his good nature, kindness, selflessness, compassion towards his wife and children and for attempting to lead his children towards piety and towards the service of Dîn. However, he will not be rewarded for distancing his children from himself or for frightening them into submission or for depriving them from Dînî education. In fact, he may even be taken to task for such behaviour.

This in no way implies that evil be allowed to flourish or that the father should take no notice of the transgressions of his children or that he consents to whatever good or bad they do. This is not what is implied. He should be on his guard but his admonishment should be:

1. Concentrated on sternness rather than repetition so that the words carry some weight.
2. The admonishment should not be unrelenting but wait for an opportune moment and admonish the child in an appropriate manner.
3. There should be a difference between the admonishment of a major and a minor. Both should not be steered with the same stick. A bit of austerity and beating where necessary may be beneficial in the case of a minor but it would be detrimental in the case of a major. In fact, the father's responsibility towards his children is relatively relaxed once they reach puberty. So, the elder children should be reared with psychology rather than coercive force because any form of coercion is temporary and by no means long lasting.

Orphans in spite of the Presence of the Father?

The heading to this chapter may seem quite strange to you. It is rather unfortunate that if the child is guilty of juvenile misbehaviour or foolishness, instead of the father encouraging the child towards righteousness or instead of supporting him, the father conversely berates the child so ruthlessly that the child wishes his father drops dead. For instance, the father wants his elder son to join him in the family business. The son refuses to comply with the father's wishes and he either opens up his own business or gets a job elsewhere. Now when the son suffers financial ruin or he is beset with some calamity, the father publicly broadcasts: "My son refused to adhere to my advice. He conforms to his father in law's advice or to the advice of his foolish friends. Now he will face the music. Now if he comes soliciting my help. I will drive him out of here. Now he will come to his senses." etc., etc.

Such abrasive declarations does not behove any father. Before the son steps foot in the world of employment, the Muslim father should refrain from assertively commanding the son to do something. Taking the son's intellectual capability into account, the father should firstly advise his son and counsel him as to what is appropriate and what is inappropriate. He should allow him a free reign. However, if he opts for something that is apparently detrimental, explain the disadvantages to him. However, in spite of this, he chooses to go ahead and he suffers some ruin or experiences some problem or the other, place your hands on his shoulder and bolster his courage. Convince him that as long as Allâh ﷻ keeps you alive, you will be there to assist him however possible. Give him an assurance that your wealth, abilities and everything else is available to him. If you have nothing, assure him that at least you will perform two Rak'âts of Salâtul Hâjat and make Du'â for him. There is nothing for him to be concerned about. However, this assurance should not be in the form of a derision or

mockery but with deep-seated sincerity of the heart. Such a stance will firstly make him realise his past obstinacy whilst your sincere advice will at any rate do away with his humiliation and annoyance and ultimately he will regard you as one of his greatest benefactors.

On such occasions, the father should ponder: "If I suppress my anger, Allâh ﷻ will reward me tremendously. My paradise will be so much more vast. My status in the hereafter will be greatly elevated. On the other hand, if I fall victim to my *nafs* (desires) and Shaytân, what a crisis it will cause at home. Problems with the son, problems with the in-laws and if the wife sides with the son, it will add to the problems at home."

So, make Du'â: "O Allâh! Protect me from the deceptions of my *Nafs* and Shaytân." And tell the son: "Son! There's nothing to worry about. 'The wayward of the morning is not wayward when he returns home in the evening'. Son! This loss of fifty thousand or five million is nothing to be troubled about. If it is in our destiny, Allâh ﷻ will replace it once again. Express gratitude that there was no loss of life and limb." Sympathise with your wife and children as well. There is always good in whatever happens.

In this manner, not only your son but your daughter-in-law, your son's in-laws, his friends, everyone will be taken with you. After your departure from this world, they will never forget your good deeds and they will always remember you in their Du'âs.

Similarly, whilst getting your son or daughter married, obviously you would have some limitations but coercion should be out of the question. When contemplating over a proposal, always ascertain the wishes of the son / daughter and their siblings as well. If you detect any displeasure, determine the cause and if there is a good reason to decline the proposal, do not force the issue. And if their displeasure

is irrational, advise them with tact and wisdom. Give them time to think it over. Give them a choice of selecting their own partner from the proposals they receive. Once they have exercised their options then only should you make a move.

If the children are adamant and do what pleases them and they are ultimately faced with a disastrous situation - like the daughter is annoyed with her husband and comes away home or the son is upset with his wife and dumps her at her father's home etc. - try and solve the problem with courage and forbearance. Don't let your fury get the better of you and cast a host of barbed words at them. Avoiding saying things like: "You did what you wanted, now suffer the consequences. If you accepted my choice of partner, you wouldn't have been suffering like this today. I've always been telling you to comply with my wishes but you failed to yield, you unworthy scoundrel! You and your mother are the same! This ghastly mother of yours has ruined you. You have humiliated me. I have no legs to stand on anymore". etc., etc. Such assertions make the heartbroken feel even more wretched. Your snide remarks only add more fuel to the fire. Your attitude will diminish all hope of the children ever recovering from their dejected state of mind. It may further dampen the spirits of the wife and children. On such occasions of marital problems, try tooth and nail to patch up and salvage the marriage. Converse with the in-laws in a very calm and composed manner. Notify both parties of their shortcomings and outline some plan of reconciliation. However the best you can do is to sincerely make Du'â for them in the darkness of the night. Beg Allâh ﷻ to maintain tranquillity between them and make their children grow up in a pleasant atmosphere.

Finally, the atmosphere at home should be favourable to the child. When the children are still young, and in spite of persistent warnings, they make a mistake, for instance, in spite of repeated warnings the child rides his bicycle and

falls down and injures himself. Now, you yell at him: "You see! You fool! This is the outcome of your disobedience! Don't even think of coming to me for medicine!" or for instance, the child is a bit extravagant or the poor child applied a bit of extra oil on the head or he added a bit of extra sugar to the cream. Now the father bellows: "You think oil comes for free? Sugar falls from the sky? Your father's got a money-making machine?" *Taubah! Taubah!* Alas! Such language is not befitting to a father. These are tainted and foul words. They should never appear on the respectable father's lips. Such words are not becoming to a Muslim father.

When Rasûlullâh ﷺ entered Makkah as a victor after the fall of Makkah, it appears in the Hadîth that Rasûlullâh ﷺ was riding his camel with his face almost touching his knees in humility. Rasûlullâh ﷺ could have intimidated the disbelievers for challenging his authority in the past but he pardoned them all and proclaimed: "There is no reproof against you today".

The father should be affectionate like this. If, in spite of advising the child, the child slips up, do not ridicule him but advise him with warmth and affection so that the child develops unflinching love for his father.

Think about it; we are the disciples of which Nabî? Our Nabî ﷺ was an embodiment of mercy for all of mankind. Why don't we at least become an embodiment of mercy to our children? The Nabî ﷺ which underwent such untold hardships at the hands of the disbelievers, when the same Nabî ﷺ comes as a victor into Makkah Mukarramah, someone declared: "Today is the day of flesh". In other words, today the disbelievers are sure to shed their blood on the streets of Makkah. But Rasûlullâh ﷺ replied: "Nay, today is not the day of *Malhamah* (flesh) but the day of *Marhamah* (forgiveness)". He then graciously announced: "Today I pardon you all just as my brother Yûsuf ﷺ pardoned his

brothers who hurled him into the well and coloured his shirt with goat's blood claiming he was devoured by a wolf. When Yûsuf ﷺ was appointed the minister of Egypt, he calmed his brother's fears saying: "Don't panic. I have forgiven all of you." In the same manner, "(O disbelievers of Makkah!) I grant amnesty to all who relentlessly harassed me". Rasûlullâh ﷺ then proclaimed to his sworn enemies: "Whomsoever enters Abû Sufyân's house is safe. Whomsoever closes his house door is safe. Whomsoever lays down his arms is safe."

We are after all disciples of this compassionate Nabî ﷺ. So take courage and sustain your nerve. Pardon your children for the greatest of misdemeanours. Recite Durûd Sharîf scrupulously at least a hundred times morning and evening. Inshâ Allâh, your heart will become soft.

Two Fatal Habits of the Father

Examine yourself as a father. You are now not only a husband to your wife but also a father to your children. Any deficiency on your part is set to have interminable consequences on your descendants. Hereunder we discuss two habits, which we urge you to eradicate if, Allâh ﷻ forbid, they are found in you.

A Nasty Tongue and a Harsh Temperament

It is a great blessing of Allâh ﷻ in that He has bestowed you with the honour of fatherhood. This is an ideal opportunity for you to take care of this trust of Allâh ﷻ so that you can secure not only your hereafter but your tranquillity of this world as well. This can only be possible if you develop good traits like kind-heartedness, integrity, good manners, forgiveness and compassion.

In order to be an ideal father it is imperative upon you to exercise patience over your children's aggravation, over their deliberate and accidental actions, over their extensive

or insignificant spells of mischievousness and over their tendency to defy you. You will have to beg Allâh ﷻ for compassion within yourself as well your children.

Whenever your children bother you, bear in mind the following four guidelines:

1. Whenever they displease you, first and foremost forgive them from the bottom of your heart and if appropriate, verbally express your forgiveness as well. When children defy their father they are already liable for the divine wrath of Allâh ﷻ. Now if the father refuses to pardon them, Allâh ﷻ will also be angry with them. So what good can be expected from one who draws the wrath of Allâh ﷻ? Therefore, in order to protect their worldly as well as eternal life of the hereafter, forgive them without delay.

2. Thereafter beg Allâh's ﷻ forgiveness on behalf of your children. Not only should you exercise forbearance over their annoyance or refrain from retaliatory action on making a mistake or compassionately accommodate their harassment or forgive them altogether but you should also not give up the concern for their religious as well as their worldly well-being. Furthermore, since the ultimate form of well-being is the well-being of the hereafter, ensure that you implore Allâh ﷻ to protect them from the punishment of the hereafter.

3. Finally, with the aim of appeasing the children continue conferring with them in future matters as well. In other words, just as you used to confer with them on a range of issues prior to this particular blunder, maintain this practice in the future as well. This will influence the children that their guardian or father does not harbour any malice in his heart and furthermore, it will impress

upon them that the spirit of welfare the father had for his children has not diminished in the least.

4. Keep your spirits high. Never allow despondency to creep over you. The Du'âs and endeavours of the father may be a source of divine guidance only in the child's old age. His endeavours sometimes bring about divine guidance after the death of the father. The father's Du'âs will unquestionably bring about something favourable. Allâh ﷻ does not allow any good attempt to go in vain. The father's Du'âs and endeavours to guide, discipline and educate his children will indisputably bring benefit in its wake even if is after some time.

Father's Bequest to His Son

Every Muslim male and female should write out his or her will. The hour of death is most uncertain. Who knows when he will be summoned to the after life? It should not be such that death comes striking at the door when some debt or other human rights are still outstanding.

Committing one's bequest to paper or even verbalising it is such a blessed undertaking that even the rebellious children will, in all likelihood, discharge the wishes of the father after his demise. There are a number of Ahâdîth emphasising the importance of making bequests within one's lifetime. In extolling its virtues, a Hadîth says: *"He who leaves this world with Wasiyyah* (written or verbal bequest) is on the *straight path. He has left this world on the path of the Sunnah. He has departed with Taqwâ* (Allâh-consciousness) *and Shahâdah and he has died whilst all his sins have been forgiven." [Mishkât p.266]*

A detailed description of writing out one's will is mentioned in the following Kitâbs:
1. Dînî Dastarkhân
2. Ahkâm-e-Mayyit

3. Tariqa-e-Wasiyyat

Read these books for an idea on how to go about structuring your will. These books contain detailed guidelines for everyone including 'Ulamâ. Some of the points mentioned are actually words of advice as well. The elders of the household should mention these words of advice to the younger ones. Read them attentively and read them out to your children as well. You may even make them memorise a few points of advice.

Whilst advising his son, a saint said: "Son! Remember my parting words of advice and you will lead a life of fortune and meet the death of a martyr. Son! He who is content with his lot remains independent of others. And he who raises his eyes to the wealth of others will die poverty-stricken. He who is not satisfied with what Allâh ﷻ has destined for him is as though he is reproaching the divine scheme of destiny. He who regards his sins as few will regard the sins of others as numerous and he who regards his own shortcomings as numerous will regard the shortcomings of others insignificant. He who divulges the secrets of others, his own secrets will be exposed. He who draws out a sword of rebellion will be killed with the same sword. He who digs a well for his brother will fall into the same well. He who sticks around with the foolish loses his self-respect whilst he who stays in the company of the 'Ulamâ gains respect. He who exposes himself to places of vice is sure to be accused. O My beloved son! Always speak the truth whether it is in your favour or against you. And distance yourself from backbiting as it generates malice and enmity in the hearts."

Instil the Significance of *Zikrullâh*

Abu 'Abbâs bin Masrûq ﷺ relates: "Whilst I was in Yemen, I saw a fisherman fishing on the sea shore. His young daughter was also seated to one side of him. Whenever he

netted a fish, he would keep it aside. His daughter, without the knowledge of the father, would fling the fish back into the water. When the father turned around to count his fish, he saw the bag empty. When he asked his daughter about the fish, she replied: "Father! I heard you saying that our beloved Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "The fish only gets caught in the net when it is negligent of the remembrance of Allâh ﷻ." So I didn't feel it appropriate to consume something that was negligent of the *Zikr* of Allâh ﷻ." Upon hearing the response of the daughter, the father burst out crying and disposed of his net. *[Safwatus Safwah]*

This is the *Tarbiyat* of our predecessors. The importance of *Zikrullâh* was embedded into the hearts of the children to such an extent that she couldn't stand consuming the fish - a Halâl source of nourishment - simply because it was negligent of *Zikrullâh* and spiritual negligence has no connection with us Muslims. Today if we launch a similar effort, we will also witness the effects of it in our homes. These children will become our shining stars to our eyes and a source of comfort to our hearts. Such *Tarbiyat* is not very difficult. From a very tender age, attach the child to *Zikrullâh* (the remembrance of Allâh ﷻ). Make him aware of the fact that when a Muslim remembers Allâh ﷻ he is protected from Shaytân and when he is negligent of Allâh ﷻ, Shaytân brings about evil thoughts into the heart.

Make the child write and learn Du'âs from the Kitâb, 'Masnûn Du'âen'. Read out the book, 'Fadâil-e-Zikr' at home. On page 59 of this book, Shaikhul Hadîth rahmatullâhi 'alaih numerates a hundred benefits of Zikr of Allâh ﷻ. At appropriate occasions, explain each virtue of Zikr in a manner that the child commits it to memory. Teach the children all the one hundred virtues and then make them compete with one another to determine who knows more and reward the winner with a suitable present.

also occupy your own self in the Zikr of Allâh ﷻ in front of the children. With this, make Du'â: "O Allâh! Make my children mindful of Your Zikr and make them grateful." It appears in the Hadîth that Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "If a person has four things it is as though he is blessed with all the good of the Dîn and the *dunyâ* (world); the first is the tongue engaged in the Zikr of Allâh ﷻ, the second is the heart brimming with gratitude, third is the body patiently enduring all forms of adversity and fourthly a wife who is not unfaithful in regards to herself and her husband's possessions." *[Extracted from Fadâil-e-Zikr p.24]*

May Allâh ﷻ grant our future generations and us these four blessings. Âmîn.

Importance of Salâh

Salâh is the most important obligation of Islâm. It is one of the pillars holding up the structure of Islâm. Rasûlullâh ﷺ is reported to have said: "Islâm is structured upon five things; to testify that there is none worthy of worship besides Allâh and Muhammad ﷺ is His servant and messenger, to establish Salâh, to discharge Zakât, to perform Hajj and to observe the fast of Ramadân. *[Mishkât vol.1 p.68]*

Discarding just one Salâh intentionally is a major sin and a sign of Kufr (disbelief).

Rasûlullâh ﷺ is reported to have said: "The distinction between a Muslim servant and Kufr is the discarding of Salâh." *[Mirqât vol.2 p.113]* In other words, intentionally disregarding the Salâh could lead a person to Kufr.

Rasûlullâh ﷺ is also reported to have declared: "The difference between us and them (the disbelievers) is the obligation of Salâh. So he who discards the Salâh has committed an act of Kufr (disbelief)." *[Mirqât vol.2 p.116]*

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Hadrat 'Abdullâh bin Shaqîq *rahmatullâhi 'alaih*, a Tâbi'ie says: "The companions of Rasûlullâh ﷺ didn't consider the discarding of anything other than Salâh to be an act of Kufr." In other words, during the time of the Sahâbah ؓ, only a disbeliever would intentionally omit his Salâh. *[Tirmidhî, Mirqât vol.2 p.119]*

Hadrat Abu Dardâ ؓ reports: "My beloved friend, Rasûlullâh ﷺ advised me: 'Do not assign anything as partners unto Allâh even if you are cut into pieces or set ablaze. And don't ever omit a Fard Salâh intentionally because he who deliberately neglects a Salâh is free of Allâh's responsibility." *[Ibn Mâjah, Mirqât vol.2 p.119]*

In a letter addressed to all the administrative officers and governors of the Muslim empire, Hadrat 'Umar Fârûq ؓ wrote: "According to me, Salâh is the most important of all your undertakings. He who is concerned about his Salâh and continues to safeguard it, he will safeguard the rest of his Dîn as well. And he who neglects his Salâh is bound to be more neglectful of the rest of Dîn." *[Muattâ, Mirqât vol.2 p.126]* It clearly appears from the aforementioned Ahâdîth that upholding Salâh is a distinctive feature of a Muslim and a sign of Îmân. Any form of deliberate disregard for Salâh is a sign of Kufr and *Nifâq* (disbelief and hypocrisy). Apart from the importance and virtues of Salâh on the whole, every Salâh has certain distinctive features that sets it apart from the rest of the Salâhs. Hereunder we mention a few characteristics and virtues of Fajr Salâh in the light of the Ahâdîth. This will further enhance the importance of Fajr Salâh.

Performance of Fajr offers the Protection of Allâh ﷻ

Hadrat Jundub Qusrî ؓ relates that Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "He who observes the Fajr Salâh admits himself into the protection of Allâh ﷻ. So Allâh Ta'âlâ should never demand his protection (back) from him. He from whom Allâh ﷻ

demands His protection, Allâh ﷻ will apprehend him and bring him face-first into the fire of hell." *[Sahîh Muslim, Mirqât vol.2 p.143]*

From this Hadîth it appears that he who performs his Fajr Salâh properly on time has fulfilled his obligation and he admits himself into the protection and custody of Allâh ﷻ. So there is no question of any harm afflicting a person in the protection of Allâh ﷻ. On the contrary, a person who neglects his Fajr Salâh has failed to fulfil his obligation. Now when he fails in his obligation, he will also be deprived of the divine obligation (protection) of Allâh ﷻ. In fact he is a criminal and Allâh ﷻ has all the right to reclaim his protection. And if Allâh ﷻ does not pardon him, he is doomed to hell. May Allâh ﷻ protect us all. Âmîn.

The aforementioned Hadîth appears in Sahîh Muslim. Another Hadîth of a similar nature appears in Tirmidhî: Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "He who observes his Fajr Salâh comes into the protection of Allâh. So let not Allâh demand His protection back from any one of you." (In other words, Allâh ﷻ will protect you if you perform your Fajr Salâh and He will not take you to task.) *[Tirmidhî in Abwâbul-Fitan vol.2 p.9]*

Imâm Tirmidhî *rahmatullâhi 'alaih* records this Hadîth in the chapters dealing with *Fitan* (trials and misfortunes to afflict this Ummah). Although this Hadîth doesn't make any mention of any *Fitnah*, Imâm Tirmidhî mentions this Hadîth in this chapter to indicate that the person or nation who is particular about their Fajr Salâh will be protected from all types of *Fitnahs*. So the most effective form of protection from all types of *Fitnah* in this age is the proper performance of Fajr Salâh with Jamâ'at. This will surely guarantee us the protection of Allâh ﷻ. Also it would deliver us from His wrath and protect us from all types of calamities. May Allâh Ta'âlâ grant us all the divine guidance to practice accordingly. Âmîn.

Obligatory Salâh is Better than Sleep

From the time of Rasûlullâh ﷺ up to this present day, in the Azân of Fajr, every Muazzin proclaims after Hayya 'Alas-Salâh and Hayya 'Alal-Falâh: "As-Salâtu Khairum-Minan Naum." (Fard) Salâh is better than sleep.

In the silent atmosphere of dawn, this proclamation of the Muazzin should be well-heeded by every Muslim cherishing a spark of Îmân in his heart. Normally Shaytân will lead you to believe that if you get up for Fajr Salâh you will be depriving yourself of vital sleep, your health will be affected, you won't get a chance to sleep later on etc., etc.

Allâh Ta'âlâ and His Rasûl ﷺ have dispelled all such doubts by proclaiming: "Fard Salâh is far better than sleep." It is better in terms of the hereafter and in terms of this world as well. It is better for the spiritual well being as well as the physical health. In every aspect, Fard Salâh is better than sleep.
Yes, if a person does not get the required sleep - which is at least six hours and no more than eight hours - at night, he may sleep after sunrise or he may fulfil the Sunnah of the afternoon siesta. The best is to develop a habit of retiring early at night. We will, Inshâ Allâh, discuss this at length in the near future.

The person who performs his 'Ishâ and Fajr Salâhs with Jamâ'at acquires the *Thawâb* (reward) of the whole night's 'Ibâdat.

Hadrat 'Uthmân رضي الله عنه reports that Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "He who performed his 'Ishâ Salâh with Jamâ'at is as though he spent half the night in 'Ibâdat and he who performed his Fajr Salâh with Jamâ'at is as though he spent the whole night in 'Ibâdat. *[Sahîh Muslim, Mirqât vol.2 p.145]*

After the Maghrib Salâh when the blanket of darkness unfolds and an exhausted man returns home after a tiring day at work, he finds it rather difficult to go to the Musjid for 'Ishâ Salâh. The gloom, fatigue, as well as the distraction of his wife and children further add to this difficulty. This is why the person who marshals his courage and performs his 'Ishâ Salâh with Jamâ'at acquires the reward of half the night of 'Ibâdat. Awakening for the Fajr Salâh seems even more gruelling. The light breeze of dawn draws the negligent into an even deeper sleep. Getting up at such a time to perform Salâh (with Jamâ'at) entitles one to the reward of the whole night of 'Ibâdat. And if a person performs both, the 'Ishâ as well as Fajr Salâhs with Jamâ'at, it is as though he performed Tahajjud Salâh all night long. So with a bit of courage, the parents can acquire this tremendous Thawâb for themselves as well as other members of the household.

One of the points inferred from the Hadîth is that only the person who goes to bed with the intention of getting up for Salâh with Jamâ'at will really be able to perform his Fajr Salâh with Jamâ'at. Such a person does not fall into a negligent slumber but he is alert even in his sleep. He checks the time whenever his eyes open at night for fear of missing his Fajr Salâh. It is as though he is waiting for Salâh all night long. And he who waits for Salâh receives the reward of unremitting Salâh. It appears in the Hadîth that Rasulullâh ﷺ said: "When one of you waits for the Salâh, it is as though he is performing the Salâh." *[Sahîh Bukhârî, Sahîh Muslim, Mirqât vol.2 p.197]*

Angels Congregate in the Fajr Salâh

Allâh ﷻ makes special mention of the Fajr Salâh and the Qirât recited therein in the following verse of the Holy Qur'ân: "Verily the Qur'ân (recital) of Fajr is witnessed." *[Sûrah Isrâ verse 78]*

In the commentary of this verse Rasûlullâh ﷺ explained: "The Salâh of Fajr is the time of the congregation of the angels. The angels of the day as well as the angels of the night congregate at this time." *[Tirmidhî vol.2 p.141]*

It appears in another Hadîth that Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "The angels of the day and night (appointed) over you humans change shift one after the other. All the angels congregate at the Salâh of Fajr and 'Asr. The angels of the night then ascend the sky and Allâh ﷻ, Who is all-knowing asks them: "In what condition did you leave My servants?" They reply: "When we left them they were engaged in Salâh and when we went to them they were engaged in Salâh." *[Muttafaq 'Alayh, Mirqât vol.2 p.142]*

The time of Fajr heralds the end of the night and the dawn of a new day and the time of 'Asr Salâh heralds the end of the day and the beginning of the night. In these two times, the angels of the day and night make a special appearance. How regrettable it would then be for a person to deprive himself of the blessed congregation of the illustrious angels at these times? So be more particular of the Salâh of Fajr and 'Asr whilst the men should ensure that they perform these two Salâhs with Jamâ'at at the Musjid.

In one Hadîth, after explaining the virtues of Azân, the virtue of the first Saff and the virtues of performing the Zuhr Salâh in summer, Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "If the people only realized the reward of performing the Fajr and 'Ishâ Salâhs, they would certainly attend these Salâhs even if they have to come crawling." *[Muttafaq 'Alayh, Mirqât vol.2 p.145]*

Rasûlullâh ﷺ also said: "No Salâh is as taxing as Fajr and 'Ishâ Salâh on a hypocrite. If they only realized the reward of these two Salâhs they would most certainly come even if they had to come crawling." *[Ibid]*

Fajr with Jamâ'at is Better than the Whole Night's 'Ibâdat

Abu Bakr bin Sulaymân ؓ narrates: "One day Hadrat Umar ؓ failed to locate my father, Hadrat Sulaymân bin Abu Hathmah ؓ, in the Fajr Salâh. Later in the day, en route to the market, Hadrat Umar ؓ stopped over at Hadrat Sulaymân's house that was on the road to the market. As he came to the door, he met Hadrat Sulaymâns mother, Hadrat Shifâ. He enquired: "What's the problem? I didn't see Sulaymân for Fajr this morning." His mother replied: "Sulaymân was engaged all night in Salâh and he fell off to sleep at the time of Fajr." Hadrat 'Umar ؓ remarked: "I regard the performance of Fajr Salâh with Jamâ'at more superior than performing (Nafl) Salâh all night long." *[Muattâ Imâm Mâlik, Mirqât vol.2 p.65]*

We glean a number of points from this Hadîth:

1. Hadrat 'Umar ؓ detected the deficiency of Hadrat Sulaymân in Salâh. This indicates that the seniors should be vigilant of the character, morals and actions of their subordinates. And Salâh should take precedence over everything else.

2. Salâh with the Jamâ'at was of such great magnitude in the time of the Sahâbah ؓ that the absence of a Muslim from the congregation was considered a matter of grave concern.

3. Instead of engaging in 'Ibâdat all night long and subsequently missing Fajr Salâh or the Jamâ'at of Fajr, it is better to sleep at night and perform the Fajr Salâh with Jamâ'at. The Salâh of Fajr is Fard; deliberately leaving it out is a major sin whereas the Salâh and 'Ibâdat of the night is Nafl (optional) and a source of abundant reward. Apart from this, the performance of Fajr Salâh with the congregation secures the reward of the whole night's 'Ibâdat. So common sense also

dictates that a person joins the Fajr Jamâ'at at all costs and refrains from staying awake all night long.

4. If there is an overriding fear of missing the Fajr Salâh, it is incorrect to engage in 'Ibâdat all night long. So how can staying awake for futile pursuits ever be acceptable? This is why Rasûlullâh ﷺ despised futile conversation after the 'Ishâ Salâh; for fear of missing the Fajr Salâh.

Futile Conversation after 'Ishâ is Makrûh

It appears in the Hadîth that Rasûlullâh ﷺ disliked sleeping before 'Ishâ and futile conversation after the 'Ishâ Salâh. *[Muttafaq 'Alayh, Mirqât vol.2 p.129]*

However, there is no problem with discussions on Dînî issues after the 'Ishâ Salâh. Also a traveller who wishes to remain awake whilst travelling engages in conversation or the husband and wife speak to each other or the student and teacher engage in some religious discussion etc., etc. all this is permitted. Hadrat 'Abdullâh bin 'Abbâs رضي الله عنه says: "Engaging in 'Ilm for a little while at night is better than the 'Ibâdat of the entire night." *[Sunan Dârmî, Mirqât vol.1 p.207]*

However, this liberty will only apply if one does not miss the Fajr Salâh since there is no reward in discarding a Fard for a Nafl (optional). Nonetheless, even for a student of Dîn it is better to retire early after the 'Ishâ Salâh and wake up early to study or to memorise because a little time spent studying in the wee hours of the morning is far better for the body and mind than studying all night long.

May Allâh ﷻ grant us the divine ability to fulfil our Farâid and Wâjibât (obligations) promptly. Âmîn.

The Farâid and Wâjibât take precedence over Nawâfil

It is extremely vital for every Muslim and religious person to take cognisance of the Shar'î arrangement of the Farâid,

...bât, Sunnah Muakkadah and Mustahab ruling governing ...laws of Islâm, otherwise even a religious person is ...nd to be mired in a vortex of practical and dogmatic ...blems.

...the laws of the Sharî'ah, the Farâid and Wâjibât take ...cedence over all other forms of edicts. The status of ...wâfil is far inferior to that of Farâid and Wâjibât. If a ...son devotes himself to the Mustahabbât and discards the ...id and Wâjibât, he is guilty of a blunder of epic ...oportions and this is a true reflection of his ignorance of ...n. Also the proximity one gains with Allâh ﷻ through the ...ajibât and Farâid cannot be compared to the proximity he ...ay gain with Nawâfil.

...adrat Mujaddid Alfe Thânî *rahmatullâhi 'alaih* writes in one ...f his dissertations: "The actions by which one could gain ...se proximity to Allâh ﷻ are either Fard (compulsory) or ...afl (optional) but in comparison to Fard, Nafl is of no ...significance. The fulfilment of a single Fard act is more ...superior to the performance of a thousand years of Nafl ...evotions even if they are performed with utmost sincerity." *[Irshâdât Mujaddid Alfe Thânî p.26]*

...mphasising on the importance of Fajr Salâh with Jamâ'at, ...e writes in another dissertation: "The performance of the ...wo Rak'ats of Fajr Salâh with Jamâ'at is a Sunnah. It is far superior than standing all night in Nafl Salâh and performing ...e Fajr Salâh without Jamâ'at." [*Maktûb no.152 Irshâdât Mujaddid Alfe Thânî p.44*]

The Abomination of Sleeping in the Morning

...ue to the importance of the time of the morning, most of ...ur pious predecessors detested sleeping even after the Fajr Salâh, except if there was some valid excuse like weakness ...ness etc. They prove this aversion from the following ...cident:

Hadrat 'Abdullâh bin 'Umar ؓ once passed by a person sleeping after the Fajr Salâh. Hadrat 'Abdullâh ؓ shook him awake and remarked: "Don't you know that Allâh ﷻ pays particular attention to His creation at this part of the morning and out of His sheer mercy He admits a great number of people into Jannah." *[Majma'uz Zawâid Lil-Haythami vol.2 p.70]*

The Holy Qur'ân also mentions that where the night is made for resting, the day is made for earning a livelihood. Allâh ﷻ says: "We have created the night as clothing and the day as a time for livelihood." *[Sûrah Naba]*

According to another Hadîth Rasûlullâh ﷺ is reported to have declared: "Sleeping in the morning hinders sustenance." *[Majma'uz Zawâid vol.4 p.111]*

The Morning – A Time of Immense *Barkat*

According to numerous Ahâdîth, the early part of the morning is a very blessed part of the day. Any form of religious or even permissible worldly task carried out in the early morning is sure to be full of blessing.

There are a number of narrations related by Hadrat 'Alî, Hadrat 'Abdullâh bin Mas'ûd, Hadrat 'Abdullâh bin Salâm, Hadrat Jâbir, Hadrat Anas, Hadrat 'Âishah, Hadrat 'Abdullâh bin 'Abbâs and Hadrat Abu Bakr ؓ, in which Rasûlullâh ﷺ made the following Du'â:

اَللّٰهُمَّ بَارِكْ لِأُمَّتِىْ فِىْ بُكُوْرِهَا

"O Allâh! Bless my Ummah in their affairs of the early morning." *[Majma'uz Zawâid vol.4 p.102-106]*

Hadrat 'Imrân bin Husain ؓ relates: "Whenever Rasûlullâh ﷺ wished to dispatch an expedition, he would do so in the early part of the morning and he would say: "Allâh has

placed tremendous *Barkat* (blessings) for my Ummah in the early part of the morning." *[Ibid]*

Hadrat 'Âishah *radiallâhû 'anhâ* narrates that Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "Search for your *Rizq* (sustenance) in the morning because the morning is a time of blessing and success."

The word *Rizq* in the Arabic language is a very comprehensive word. Whether it is agriculture or commerce, academic pursuits or physical actions, whether one is in search of spiritual nourishment or physical well-being, whether it is basic studies or mere meditation, chores within the home or errands outside the house, the early part of the morning is the ideal and blessed time to carry out these tasks. Any work carried out at this time guarantees *Barkat* (blessings) and ease and there is a greater hope of success.

Also, the mental, physical and spiritual faculties are more alert and fresh at this part of the morning. This makes the work more productive and easier. Also, this time attracts the special mercy of Allâh ﷻ. So each and every person should avail himself of this valuable time.

Engaging in Dînî Activities after the Fajr Salâh

Rasûlullâh ﷺ is reported to have said: "The person who remains seated after the Fajr Salâh and thereafter performs two Rak'ats of Châsht Salâh without saying or doing anything other than good in the intervening period, all his sins will be forgiven even if they are equivalent to the foam of the sea." *[Abû Dâwûd, Mirqât vol.2 p.203]*

Mullâ 'Alî Qârî *rahmatullâhi 'alaih* writes in the commentary of this Hadîth: "A person will acquire this virtue whether he remains seated in the Musjid or he returns home and engages in Zikr or meditation or whether he engages in teaching or learning Dîn or he makes Tawâf of the K'abah. In all such cases, he will attain the virtues."

Hadrat Thânwî *rahmatullâhi 'alaih* says: "On the advice of a doctor or medical practitioner, if one takes a walk after the Fajr Salâh to remain fit and healthy, he will, Inshâ Allâh, also attain the Thawâb (provided he does not engage in evil talk) because taking care of one's health is also vital. The performance of Dînî obligations is based upon good health."

Hadrat Jâbir bin Samurah relates: "After the completion of his Fajr Salâh, Rasûlullâh ﷺ would remain seated in a cross-legged position until the sun had fully risen." *[Abû Dâwûd, Mirqât vol.9 p.89]*

From other narrations it appears that Rasûlullâh ﷺ also engaged in Dînî discussions with the Sahâbah at this time.

Strategy for Rising Early

Subsequent to the study of the aforementioned Ahâdith, the only outstanding issue now is how to rise early in the morning. The compulsion of Salâh is accepted and the sin of discarding Salâh is indisputable. No Muslim contests this, but in spite of this awareness, people still find it difficult to get up in the morning. So what is the solution to this problem?

There are three solutions to deal with this problem; concern, courage and Du'â. If these three are found, no other solution will be required.

1. Concern.

In other words there should be a genuine concern for Salâh. He should have a fear of Allâh's punishment for sleeping through the Salâh time and the dread of misfortune afflicting his property. He should harbour a profound fear of his Dînî and worldly affairs lacking *Barkat*. He should have the feeling of impending catastrophe for sleeping at this blessed time and he should cherish the hope of acquiring the mercy and blessings of Allâh. He should have faith in the

the reward of Allâh and he should look forward to the pleasure of Allâh. He who acquires the pleasure of Allâh is set for worldly as well as eternal prosperity. Bearing in mind the aforementioned points will cultivate a concern within the heart and this will in turn assist him in getting up for Fajr.

Every one of us knows that if we have to catch a flight or train early in the morning or we have some important work to attend to, our eyes not only open on time but we have a fitful sleep with our eyes opening up every now and again. This is due to anxiety. The same anxiety should be concentrated upon Salâh as well. In fact the concern should be more because if you miss your flight or train, you only suffer worldly loss but if you miss your Salâh you could face harm in this world as well as the next.

2. Courage.

This is the spirit that enables a person to carry out a seemingly impossible task. It is due to this very courage that enables a person to get out of a warm cuddly bed into the freezing cold. On the contrary, if a person lacks resolve, he is bound to languidly slouch in bed even after an uninterrupted eight hour nap. Courage is also vital in rising early in the morning. Upon awakening, instead of stretching and yawning, sit up and recite the Masnûn Du'âs. Recite some form of Zikr or start reciting a verse of the Holy Qur'ân.

It is reported that Rasûlullâh ﷺ used to recite the last Rukû' of Sûrah Âl-'Imrân upon awakening. Then bolster your spirit and jump out of bed. Upon awakening, if a person relaxes in bed and continues yawning and changing sides or goes deeper under his duvet, his eyes will only open after sunrise. So instead of leisurely climbing out of bed, the only solution is just to jump out of bed. This is courage.

3. **Du'â.**

In other words, recite the Masnûn Du'âs before retiring to bed and also make Du'â unto Allâh ﷻ to assist you in getting up for the Fajr Salâh.

Additional Strategies

1. Don't overeat at night. Take a short stroll after supper.
2. Retire to bed as early as possible.
3. Refrain from chatting to friends and associates over the phone after the 'Ishâ Salâh. However, conversation between the couple, 'Ilmî engagements and the conversation of a traveller are exempted by the Hadîth itself. *[Majma'uz Zawâid vol.2 p.62, Shamâil Tirmidhî -Hadîth Ummu Zara']* So a fleeting chat or necessary discussion is fine as long as the Salâh is not missed.
4. Recite the last few verses of Sûrah Kahf - from "Innal Lazîna Âmanû wa 'Amilus-Sâlihât...up to the end of the Sûrah – and implore Allâh ﷻ to rouse you at a certain time. Inshâ Allâh, your eyes will open at the appropriate time and from then on your duty is to make sure you get out of bed. *[Tarbiyatus Sâlik vol.2 p.203]*
5. Set your alarm clock.
6. Appoint a person you are informal with, to awaken you up for Fard Salâh at all costs. When he awakens you up or the alarm clock buzzes, make sure you leave your bed.

If the eyes still fail to open in spite of all these strategies, then what?

If a person really implements the aforementioned strategies gleaned from the Qur'ân, Sunnah and the sayings of the pious predecessors, he can Inshâ Allâh, be sure of success. A sincere effort and profound courage coupled with the aforementioned strategies will dispel all forms of negligence

and indolence and Inshâ Allâh, he will be able to perform the Fajr Salâh timeously with Jamâ'at.

On the other hand, if he implemented all the strategies, he was not lacking in courage or concern and he made a firm conviction to get up for Fajr Salâh but his eyes coincidentally failed to open whereby he missed his Salâh, he will not be deemed sinful in the eyes of the Sharî'ah. In spite of taking all precautions and applying all possible measures to get up in the morning a person sleeps so deeply that his eyes can't open for Fajr Salâh, he is constrained and excused. He is not to be blamed. Rasûlullâh ﷺ is reported to have said: "The pen (recording the deeds) is raised from three people; the person sleeping until he awakens, a child until he reaches puberty and an insane person until he regains sanity." *[Abû Dâwûd, Dârmî, Mirqât vol.6 p.290]*

So the person who in spite of the firm intention and in spite of implementing the strategies fails to awaken is considered Ma'zûr (excused), because there was no deliberate transgression on his part. Rasûlullâh ﷺ is reported to have said: "There is no transgression in sleep. Transgression occurs only in the state of wakefulness." *[Sahîh Muslim, Mirqât vol.2 p.135]*

Don't Delay in the Performance of Qadâ Salâh

Generally it has been observed that when someone misses his Salâh, he reflects that since the time for the Salâh has already run out, he will perform it at his leisure. So he eventually goes back to sleep or engages in some other activity. Sometimes he performs his Qadâ of Fajr with his Zuhr Salâh. This is in total contrast to the approach employed by Rasûlullâh ﷺ.

Rasûlullâh ﷺ is reported to have advised: "When a person forgets to perform his Salâh or he oversleeps, he should make amends by performing it (the moment) he remembers

it." According to another narration: "There is no other reparation for this." *[Muttafaq 'Alayh, Mirqât vol.2 p.135]*

For this reason, the 'Ulamâ are unanimous that it is incorrect to needlessly delay the Qa<u>d</u>â <u>S</u>alâh. In fact some of the jurists are of the opinion that one should not even wait for the Makrûh time to pass but he should perform his Qa<u>d</u>â <u>S</u>alâh the moment he awakens irrespective of the time.

Nonetheless, if it is a Makrûh (time), one should wait a little while and then perform the Qa<u>d</u>â <u>S</u>alâh the moment the Makrûh time elapses. This is the directive of Rasûlullâh ﷺ.

All the same, get out of bed the moment your eyes open and strive to perform the <u>S</u>alâh as soon as possible as this was the instruction of Rasûlullâh ﷺ. Also, who knows when death will strike? Perhaps he will miss his <u>S</u>alâh altogether without compensating it with Qa<u>d</u>â. As a consequence, he will be guilty of a major sin. May Allâh ﷻ protect us all. Âmîn.

Impulsive Sunnah

<u>H</u>a<u>d</u>rat Maulânâ Faqîr Mu<u>h</u>ammad <u>S</u>â<u>h</u>ib *ra<u>h</u>matullâhi 'alaih* was a Khalîfah of <u>H</u>a<u>d</u>rat Thânwî *ra<u>h</u>matullâhi 'alaih*. He was well known for his interminable spells of weeping (out of the fear of Allâh ﷻ). He was a resident of Sar<u>h</u>ad. On the advice of <u>H</u>a<u>d</u>rat Muftî Mu<u>h</u>ammad <u>H</u>asan <u>S</u>â<u>h</u>ib *ra<u>h</u>matullâhi 'alaih*, he undertook the oath of allegiance at the hands of <u>H</u>a<u>d</u>rat Thânwî *ra<u>h</u>matullâhi 'alaih*. He underwent extreme hardship. With great difficulty and hardship he used to come from Sar<u>h</u>ad to Thanabowan (<u>H</u>a<u>d</u>rat Thânwî's ﷺ village).

On one occasion he was travelling to Thanabowan. After the 'Ishâ <u>S</u>alâh he travelled from Amritsar to Ambala whilst standing in the train compartment. The train was packed to capacity. Just before dawn, as the train pulled out of Ambala station, he managed to get a place to sit. Due to standing all night long, he was extremely tired. The moment he sat down, he fell asleep and missed his Fajr <u>S</u>alâh. His eyes only opened after sunrise. He performed the Qa<u>d</u>â <u>S</u>alâh later on but he was awfully distressed for missing his <u>S</u>alâh. He was constantly chiding himself: "You are on your way to the Shaikh and yet you missed your Fajr <u>S</u>alâh?" You are not even fit to show your face to your Shaikh! With what face would you go to him?"

In this state of perturbation he reached Thanabowan and mustered the courage to appear before <u>H</u>a<u>d</u>rat Thânwî *ra<u>h</u>matullâhi 'alaih*. As he reached the Majlis, <u>H</u>a<u>d</u>rat Thânwî interrupted his discourse and said: "There are two types of Sunnah; voluntary and involuntary. A person may not voluntarily implement the involuntary Sunnah. Yes, if he involuntarily does so, he will be conforming to the Sunnah."

<u>H</u>a<u>d</u>rat Thânwî *ra<u>h</u>matullâhi 'alaih* went on to say: "Some people are jaundiced by *Taqwâ*. They believe that not a single <u>S</u>alâh should ever be made Qa<u>d</u>â. Obviously people must strive to ensure that they don't ever miss a single <u>S</u>alâh but if the <u>S</u>alâh is missed and Qa<u>d</u>â is performed later on, one should think that Allâh ﷻ has given him the opportunity of carrying out a Sunnah involuntarily because even Rasûlullâh ﷺ once unintentionally missed the Fajr <u>S</u>alâh and performed it after sunrise."

Note: This will only apply if a person habitually performs his Fajr <u>S</u>alâh with Jamâ'at and in spite of taking all precautions he unintentionally misses out his Fajr <u>S</u>alâh. This does not apply to one who misses out a number of his <u>S</u>alâhs without a valid Shar'î excuse. Such a person is duty-bound to amend his ways. He should somehow get into the habit of Fajr <u>S</u>alâh even if it means punishing himself for missing out the <u>S</u>alâh.

Self-Inflicted Punishment for Neglecting Salâh

Although the *Kaffârah* (expiation) for missing out a Salâh is to make amends (by performing Qadâ) the moment a person awakens and there is no other form of charity or optional prayer (as mentioned in the previous Hadîth), but if a person routinely misses out his Salâh either out of laziness or, out of negligence, he should schedule some form of punishment for himself. Sometimes, this form of self-inflicted punishment is very effective as the fear of the punishment makes him perform the Salâh consistently.

The punishment could be in the form of:

1. Performing eight to ten Rak'âts of Nafl Salâh for every Fard Salâh omitted.
2. Leaving out breakfast (or any other meal) the day the Salâh was neglected.
3. Disbursing alms to the poor especially if alms-giving is burdensome.

From the aforementioned strategies, the fundamental strategy is to develop the concern for the hereafter, build courage and cultivate the love of Allâh ﷻ. He who has a courageous disposition and a heart infused with the love of Allâh ﷻ and the concern for the hereafter, it is not difficult for him to get up for Fajr Salâh. If a person marshals his courage and gets up at once to perform the Fajr Salâh appropriately he will relish in such spiritual delight that the bliss of sleep will seem radically insignificant to the pleasure of Salâh.

May Allâh ﷻ grant us all the power of Îmân, the sweetness of piety and the delight of devotion. Âmîn. [Courtesy Al-Balâgh, November 1996, by Muftî Mahmûd Ashraf Sâhib 'Uthmânî]

Fundamentals of Success for Both Worlds

The ideal father is he who brings his children up in the best possible manner and imparts to them the fundamentals that would guarantee them success in this world as well as the next. They should not be in need of anyone in this world nor should their hereafter be in ruin.

In view of this, we record a few fundamentals, which, if implemented by the father, memorised and put into practice by the children, would assure success and shelter them from the sorrows of the world.

1. Impart the prophetic advice of Rasûlullâh ﷺ to your children: "Be independent from what the people possess, they will love you." In other words, if you want the people to like you, shift your gaze away from their wealth and possessions otherwise they will consider you enthusiastic over their property and stay away from you.

2. Have unwavering faith in the fact that whatever calamity befalls you it was predestined for you and whatever benefit you acquire it was already written down in your favour. Therefore, do not despair over any misfortune nor agonise over missing out on some expected benefit. Such conduct is futile and it is an expression of displeasure over Allâh's ﷻ decree.

3. When someone questions you, do not respond to every single question because responding to every single question belies intelligence. Sometimes the response could be incorrect or it could be a manifestation or acknowledgement of a sensitive issue. This could subsequently lead to overwhelming regret. Also remember; ponder over your answer before you respond. Avoid an instantaneous reply. First ponder over your answer, let your mind and heart mull over it and then only bring it onto your tongue otherwise not. Also,

if there are a number of people in a gathering and the question is directed to a particular person, don't answer. Remain silent. Yes, you should respond if the question is directed to you.

4. If you are confronted with an ignoramus who is adamant on his assertions in spite of advising him and his conduct is annoying to you, make Salâm and depart or alter the drift of the discussion. For instance, if he wishes to argue a point, change the topic altogether. As Allâh ﷻ says: "When they (the true servants of Allâh ﷻ) are addressed by the ignorant, they say 'Salâm'". *[Sûrah Furqân verse 63]* In other words, they say: "Assalâmu 'Alaykum, brother! Excuse me."

5. If Allâh ﷻ bestows His blessings upon you, express your heartfelt gratitude in abundance as this would increase the blessing. Allâh Ta'âlâ declares: "If you express gratitude, I will certainly increase (this blessing) for you." The recitation of the following Du'â has been advised after every Far<u>d</u> <u>S</u>alâh:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اَعِنِّىْ عَلٰى ذِكْرِكَ وَ شُكْرِكَ وَ حُسْنِ عِبَادَتِكَ

"O Allâh! Assist me in remembering You and in expressing gratitude unto You and assist me in worshiping you appropriately."
[Abû Dâwûd vol.1 p.213]

If someone does you a favour or gives you something, show your appreciation and express gratitude towards this gesture. It appears in the <u>H</u>adîth: "He who fails to express his gratitude towards the people has failed to express his gratitude towards Allâh." *[Tirmidhî vol.2 p.17]*

Du'âs for expressing *Shukr* – Gratitude:

اَللّٰهُمَّ لَكَ الْحَمْدُ كُلُّهُ وَ لَكَ الشُّكْرُ كُلُّهُ وَ لَكَ الْمُلْكُ كُلُّهُ وَ لَكَ الْخَلْقُ كُلُّهُ بِيَدِكَ الْخَيْرُ كُلُّهُ وَ اِلَيْكَ يُرْجَعُ الْاَمْرُ كُلُّهُ اَسْئَلُكَ مِنَ الْخَيْرِ كُلِّهٖ وَاَعُوْذُبِكَ مِنَ الشَّرِّ كُلِّهٖ

"O Allâh! All praise is due to you. All forms of gratitude are due to You alone. The entire kingdom belongs to you. The entire creation is for you. All goodness is in Your absolute control and all affairs ultimately return to you. I ask Thee of all good and I seek Thy refuge from all evil."

رَبِّ اجْعَلْنِىْ لَكَ شَكَّارًا لَّكَ ذَكَّارًا لَّكَ رَهَّابًا لَّكَ مِطْوَاعًا لَّكَ مُخْبِتًا اِلَيْكَ اَوَّاهًا مُّنِيْبًا

"O Allâh! Make me exceedingly grateful unto You, very mindful of You, extraordinarily frightened of You, exceedingly obedient to You, subservient to You and make me one who repents before You with lamentation." *[<u>H</u>âkim vol.1 p.520]*

Rasûlullâh ﷺ would also make the following Du'â:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اجْعَلْنِىْ صَبُوْرًا وَّ اجْعَلْنِىْ شَكُوْرًا

"O Allâh! Make me exceptionally patient and enormously grateful."
[Jâm'ius <u>S</u>aghîr Lis-Suyû<u>t</u>î p.56 from Buraidah ؓ]

In this Du'â Rasûlullâh ﷺ implores Allâh ﷻ to render him Shakûr (enormously grateful).

Tafsir Mazharî reveals that <u>H</u>a<u>d</u>rat Nû<u>h</u> ؑ was referred to as 'enormously grateful' because whenever he did something - big or small - he always uttered "Bismillâh" and "Alhamdulillâh". Whenever he ate or drank something, or

whenever he put on a garment he would praise Allâh ﷻ and express his gratitude for bestowing upon him His enormous favours. This is why Allâh ﷻ honoured him with the title of *Shakûr*. *[Tafsîr Mazharî vol.5 p.404]*

This is why we have also been taught to implore Allâh ﷻ: "O Allâh! Together with expressing our gratitude, make us of those who think highly of Your boons. And complete Your favours upon us." Another Du'â similar to this reads: "O Allâh! We are Your helpless servants. We are utterly in need of your favours. So shower us abundantly with Your favours." The actual words of the Du'â are:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اجْعَلْنَا شَاكِرِيْنَ لِنِعَمِكَ مُثْنِيْنَ بِهَا قَابِلِيْهَا وَ اَتِمَّهَا عَلَيْنَا

"O Allâh! Make us grateful of Your bounties. Make us admire and praise your favours upon us, make us accept them and complete Your favours upon us." *[Musannaf Ibn Abî Shaibah vol.6 p.68]*

Rasûlullâh ﷺ is reported to have recited the following Du'â as well:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اجْعَلْنِيْ اُعَظِّمُ شُكْرَكَ وَ اُكْثِرُ ذِكْرَكَ وَ اَتَّبِعُ نَصِيْحَتَكَ وَ اَحْفَظُ وَصِيَّتَكَ

"O Allâh! Make me absolutely grateful to You and make me remember You abundantly and abide by Your advice and make me safeguard Your commandments." *[Tirmidhî on the authority of Abû Hurairah vol.1 p.99]*

Sometimes Rasûlullâh ﷺ used to make this du'â

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّىْ اَسْئَلُكَ شُكْرَ نِعْمَتِكَ وَ حُسْنَ عِبَادَتِكَ

"O Allâh! I implore You to make me grateful of Your bounties and I beg You to make me worship You splendidly." *[Tirmidhî vol.2 p.178]*

Ponder over the prominence of *Shukr* (gratitude) that Rasûlullâh ﷺ asked for it again and again in a variety of Du'âs.

So he who wishes to increase his blessings in the future or he wishes to retain his present fortunes should express his gratitude in abundance. Similarly, he who wishes to put a stop to his problems should also express *Shukr* in abundance. *Shukr* is such a great blessing that Allâh ﷻ instructs His servants to beg of Him in the following manner:

رَبِّ أَوْزِعْنِي أَنْ أَشْكُرَ نِعْمَتَكَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ وَعَلَىٰ وَالِدَيَّ وَأَنْ أَعْمَلَ صَالِحًا تَرْضَاهُ وَأَدْخِلْنِي بِرَحْمَتِكَ فِي عِبَادِكَ الصَّالِحِينَ

"O my Lord! Grant me persistence in expressing my gratitude unto You for the blessings You have bestowed upon me and my parents and (grant me persistence) in doing good deeds that are pleasing to You. And solely with Your mercy admit me into Your (group) of pious servants." *[Bayânul Qur'ân p.342]*

Ponder over this Du'â of the chosen servant of Allâh Ta'âlâ, Hadrat Sulaimân عليه السلام. Can you consider a Nabî pleading with Allâh ﷻ to make him a grateful servant? Imagine what gratitude we have to express and how much Du'â of *Shukr* we ordinary souls will have to make?

6. Give your friends and family members a gift now and then even if the gift is valued at a few Rands. This will increase existing love for one another. Rasûlullâh ﷺ is reported to have said: "Give gifts to one another as this increases mutual love." *[Kanzul 'Ummâl vol.6 p.110]*

7. Fulfil your promises even if you have to suffer a loss of some sort. Allâh ﷻ declares: "Discharge the promise. Verily, the promise will be queried." In other words, all obligations will be queried on the day of judgement. Rasûlullâh ﷺ is reported to have said: "There are three signs of a hypocrite; he lies when he speaks, he betrays a trust and he fails to fulfil a promise."

8. If you wish to be cherished by the people, perform good deeds and stay as a perfect Mumin. This will heighten your esteem in the eyes of Allâh ﷻ as well. Allâh ﷻ declares: "Verily, Allâh loves those who do good." When Allâh ﷻ loves a person He – in the words of the Hadîth – makes him beloved to everyone in the earth and the skies.

9. If you want Allâh's ﷻ eternal assistance, exercise patience on the adversities of this world. Allâh ﷻ says: "Verily, Allâh is with the patient." Together with this, persist in good actions. Allâh ﷻ will certainly reward you for it. As Allâh ﷻ declares: "Verily, I do not forfeit the action of anyone amongst you." Always remember, by Allâh ﷻ there may be delays but never neglect.

10. If you like the food either at an invitation or at home, commend the person who prepared the meal. This will hearten the cook and your praise will be an expression of gratitude as well. It may also dispel the exhaustion of preparing the meal.

Eight Golden Rules of Upbringing

It is the responsibility of the parents to impart Dînî knowledge to the children as it is this very knowledge that enables a person to recognise his Creator. If a devotee engages in *'Ibâdat* (devotion) all night long whilst an 'Âlim sleeps during the same duration, the sleep of an Âlim is more virtuous than the devotion of a devotee. However, *'Amal* (practical implementation) of this knowledge is also essential because knowledge without practical implementation is worthless. So it is a vital duty of the parents to rear their children correctly and to make them practising Muslims.

Hereunder we record eight points. Endeavour to inculcate them within yourself first and bring your children up accordingly. Instil these values within them from a very early age. Inshâ Allâh, these eight rules will prove to be a source of radiant guidance for them.

1. Every single person has a love for someone or something; selected items, games, cars, clothes, parents, wife, wealth, friends etc. However, when a person goes to the grave, the things he holds dear are separated from him. So a person should cherish good deeds instead because when he dies his good deeds will accompany him to his grave and beyond.

2. Allâh ﷻ says in the Holy Qur'ân: "And he who fears standing before his Lord (on the day of judgement) and restrains his desires from (prohibited) whims, verily, Jannah is his abode." *[Sûrah Nâzi'ât verse 40]* A person should perpetually restrain his evil self from falling prey to the prohibitions of Allâh ﷻ in a manner that the *Nafs* (self) becomes dedicated to the obedience of Allâh ﷻ.

3. It is quite evident in the world that people take extra care of things that they hold dear. Allâh ﷻ declares: "Whatever you possess will terminate (either the item will cease to exist or you will) and whatever Allâh has, will remain perpetually." *[Sûrah Nahl verse 96]* So if a person loves something very dearly he might as well forward it to Allâh ﷻ where it will remain eternally preserved. In other words, he should spend it in the path of Allâh ﷻ.

4. It has been observed in this world that everyone regards immense wealth a source of honour. Some people believe family lineage or noble descent to be a form of privilege in this world whereas Allâh ﷻ proclaims: "Verily, the most honourable of you in the eyes of Allâh is he who has the most *Taqwâ* (Allâh-consciousness)."

[Sûrah Hujurât] So instead of hankering after other mundane pursuits, people should strive to acquire Taqwâ.

5. People who condemn, fault or verbally abuse others are generally motivated by pangs of jealousy. Allâh ﷻ says in the Holy Qur'ân: "We have distributed amongst them their livelihood and (in this distribution) We have given preference to some over others (so that they may procure the services of one another.)" [Sûrah Zukhruf verse 32] Imagine if everyone is equal in livelihood, who will do the manual labour? Who will want to be employed by someone else? The whole system of the world will come crumbling down. So, on account of this verse, leave aside jealousy. Sever your relationship with the creation and maintain a bond with your Creator. Since Allâh ﷻ distributes sustenance as He pleases and He has absolute control over increasing or decreasing it, man has no control over the amassing of wealth. So jealousy and hostility on grounds of material wealth is pointless.

6. Look around you and you will witness that everyone has some gripe or hostility against someone else whereas Allâh ﷻ says: "Surely Shaytân is your enemy. So regard him as your enemy." [Sûrah Fâtir] So a Muslim should maintain his hostility against Shaytân and cease hostility with everyone else.

7. *Cast a glance at the peoples of the world and you will see that each and every one is engrossed in the pursuit of sustenance. They are even prepared to humiliate themselves before others and they wouldn't even hesitate to fall into Harâm in the pursuit of this sustenance. Allâh ﷻ declares: "There is not a single living thing on the earth but its sustenance is the responsibility of Allâh." [Sûrah Hûd] We human beings also form part of those on the earth and the provision of our sustenance is also the responsibility of Allâh ﷻ. So a* person should rather engage in those things Allâh ﷻ has enforced upon him and stop worrying about the responsibility of Allâh ﷻ.

8. Think about it; every single member of Allâh's ﷻ creation, banks on someone or something which itself is part of the creation. Some depend on their resources whilst some rely on their businesses. Some bank on their artistic skills whilst others count on their skill and expertise, whereas everything is part of Allâh's ﷻ mortal creation. Allâh ﷻ says: "And he who relies on Allâh, so Allâh is sufficient for him." [Sûrah Talâq verse 3] So uphold absolute trust in Allâh ﷻ alone.

We Are One Ummah

Instil into the child that we are not a nation or tribe like others who are segregated by geographical boundaries or spoken languages. We are one Ummah whose unity is bound by the Holy Qur'ân. A Muslim regardless of his ethnicity, language or colour, is a brother unto another Muslim. Both of them are of the same Ummah. In a proper display of this unity, every year millions of Muslims from every corner of the globe assemble for Hajj at the Baitullâh.

All of them clad in the same outfit (Ihrâm), all reciting the same verses (Talbiyah) and all of them visually displaying themselves to be the Muslim servants of the same deity and members of the same Ummah. One Muslim is on one end of the globe and another is on the other, one is from Africa and another from Asia, one is a resident of America whilst another is from Australia, but they are all bonded by the same Kalimah, the same Qur'ân, the same Nabî ﷺ and the same Dîn. All of them are of the same Ummah and Jamâ'at (Congregation).

The apprehension of one is the apprehension of the other. The crisis facing one person is a crisis facing the other. The defeat of one is the defeat of the other. Rasûlullâh ﷺ also echoed this sentiment when he declared: "The Muslims, in their love and affection for one another is like one body; when any part of the body is ailing the rest of the body is threatened with sleeplessness and fever." [Sahîh Muslim vol.2 p.321]

In this Hadîth Rasûlullâh ﷺ conveyed the mutual relationship and common bond amongst the Muslims in the form of an illustrative example. The Muslim society (Ummah) is like a single body. If just one part of the body is afflicted, the entire body shares the pain and the whole body becomes restless. If the smallest toe is in pain, the whole body is unable to sleep. The heart and mind is agitated. The tongue sighs in pain. The face graphically reflects the pain the body is suffering. Similarly, if one Muslim is afflicted, it is the duty of all Muslims to share in his pain and anguish. What greater adversity can there be than the Muslims slithering towards Jahannam due to their defiance of the divine laws of Allâh ﷻ? What can be worse than them abandoning the way of Allâh ﷻ and His Rasûl ﷺ? The Muslims are taking on the customs of the disbelieving Kuffâr and they are proud of it! They are embarrassed with Dîn and piety and they regard it as an impediment towards material progress! The definite outcome of this is the wrath and punishment of Allâh ﷻ. So explain to your children that we Muslims are like a single cell; the destruction of one spells disaster for all of us. Each one of us is responsible to protect the others from destruction. Each one of us should be concerned about the course of action we should take for restoring the Ummah on the spiritual pinnacle it gloried in during the time of Rasûlullâh ﷺ and the Sahâbah ؓ. To this end, every individual should, to the best of his ability, make an effort to revive this Dîn.

To attain this, teach your children righteousness and instruct them to convey this to their friends as well. Similarly, cultivate within the children the concern for this Ummah. This concern will swell as they grow older. Perhaps your upbringing will produce a personage who will get the privilege of revitalizing this Ummah. This will prove beneficial to you as well as your children in this world as well as the next. May Allâh ﷻ grant all of us the divine guidance. Âmîn.

Hadrat Luqmân's ؑ Advice to his Son

Every father strives to make his child into an embodiment of virtue. This is why the father periodically advises his children. Hereunder we share a few words of advice of Hadrat Luqmân ؑ to his son. You may also offer the same words of advice to your children. May we remind you that before imparting the advice to your children make Du'â: "O Allâh! Grant my children and me the divine ability to practise on these advices and grant our forthcoming generations the ability to practise and disseminate them." Âmîn.

The following words of advice are extremely valuable and implementing them in our lives is vital. We request you to read through each one at least thrice and now and again read them out to your family members as well. This will, Inshâ Allâh, prove to be enormously beneficial.

Hadrat Luqmân ؑ was renowned for his wisdom. Some of the words of advice he conveyed to his son are:

1. Son! Sit in the gatherings of the 'Ulamâ as frequently as possible and listen attentively to the words of the wise. Due to the luminance of wisdom, Allâh ﷻ illuminates the spiritually dead heart just as a hard downpour transforms arid terrain into fertile land.

2. Son! Pin your hopes unto Allâh ﷻ in such a manner that you are not fearless of His punishment and be terrified of His punishment to such a degree that you do not despair of His mercy. His son responded: "Father, the heart is one mass. How then can it contain hope as well as fear?" He replied: "A *Mumin* (Believer) is as though he has two hearts; one is brimming with absolute hope and the other with utter fear."

3. Son! Recite the Du'â رَبِّ اغْفِرْلِي in abundance. There are some divine moments of benevolence wherein Allâh ﷻ grants whatever a person asks for.

4. Son! Good deeds cannot be executed without a firm conviction in Allâh ﷻ. He whose conviction is weak, his actions will be relatively lame.

5. Son! When Shaytân entangles you in doubt, prevail over him with conviction. If he draws you towards indolence in good actions, overcome his insinuations with the remembrance of the grave and the final hour. If Shaytân entices you either with anxiety or with temptation in matters relating to worldly affairs, inform him that regardless of whatever happens, you are destined to leave this world.

6. *Son! He who speaks lies loses the gleam* of his face. He *who has bad habits is subdued by anxiety.* It is easier to *move mountains than to make a stupid* person *understand.*

7. *Son! Remain exceedingly far away from lies.* Lies may *seem very appetizing like the succulence* of chicken flesh *but the same habit will be a source* of enmity for the *person who engages in falsehood.*

8. Son! Conscientiously attend to the Janâzah (Salâh) and refrain from attending social functions because the funeral service reminds you of the hereafter and social gatherings like weddings etc. draw you further into the *dunyâ* (worldly affairs).

9. Son! Avoid eating when your stomach is full. It is better to throw the food to a dog than eating it on a full stomach.

10. Son! Don't become so sweet that people swallow you nor become so bitter that people spit you out.

11. Son! Don't be more helpless than a rooster. It starts crowing long before dawn whilst you are fast asleep in bed.

12. Son! Don't delay in repenting, as death has no appointment. It strikes very unexpectedly.

13. Son! Avoid befriending an ignorant person, lest his ignorance appeals to you and do not bear a grudge against a wise person lest he shuns you.

14. Son! Don't share your food with anyone but the pious and seek the counsel of the 'Ulamâ in all your affairs.

15. When asked who is the most awful person, he replied: "He who does not bother when anyone witnesses him committing an offence."

16. Son! Frequent the gatherings of the pious. You will be able to acquire some virtue from them and if the special *Rahmah* (mercy) of Allâh ﷻ happens to descend on them at that time some of it will rub onto you. Son! Avoid mingling with evil people. There is no hope of any good from them and if they are struck with the punishment of Allâh ﷻ you may also be afflicted.

17. Son! From the day you came into this world you are getting closer and closer to the hereafter.

18. Son! Steer clear of debt as it is a source of humiliation during the day and a source of anxiety at night.

19. Son! If someone comes complaining to you that so and so gouged out both his eyes and both his eyes are really gouged out, don't jump to a conclusion until you have heard the other side of the story. Perhaps this person initiated the problem and gouged out two sets of eyes.

Faqîh Abul Laith *rahmatullâhi 'alaih* relates that when Hadrat Luqmân عليه السلام was on his deathbed, he summoned his son and said: "Son! I have offered you a great many words of advice in my lifetime. At this moment I will offer you six advices:

1. Occupy yourself in this world only to the extent to which you will be living here.
2. Worship Allâh ﷻ to the extent that you need Him.
3. Prepare for the hereafter to the extent that you will be dwelling there.
4. As long as you don't have firm conviction of deliverance from the fire of hell, continue striving for your deliverance.
5. Sin only to the extent to which you will be able to tolerate the fire of Jahannam.
6. If you wish to sin, go to a place where Allâh ﷻ and His angels are unable to see you."

Beware of Shaytân's Deceit

Shaytân is our eternal and genuine enemy. His common strategy is to show us the wretchedness in the things that are beneficial to us. He attempts to dissuade us from that which Allâh ﷻ and His Rasûl ﷺ have declared to be beneficial to us. On the contrary, he portrays a rosy picture of the things that are detrimental to us. For instance, Allâh ﷻ and

His Rasûl ﷺ have declared the payment of Zakât and other forms of charity as beneficial to us. In reality, charity is a source of Barkat and a means of protecting our wealth but Shaytân presents to us a picture of financial loss. Similarly, Rasûlullâh ﷺ declared usury a cause of utter ruin but Shaytân portrays it to be a system of categorical advantage. In fact, nowadays, the name of usury has been altered to 'profit' whilst bribery has been amended to 'donation'.

Nonetheless, here we wish to draw your attention to the enormous deception of Shaytân, which is the concept that "another man's wife and our children are always the best".

Whereas this is absolutely incorrect. Think about it, the thing that Allâh ﷻ has blessed you with, how can it be bad for you? Never! Why don't you think your wife to be the most beautiful woman on earth? She is the most gorgeous for you even if she is defective in some way or the other because nobody but Allâh ﷻ is devoid of imperfection and deficiency. In Islâm, the objective of Nikâh, apart from procreation, is to safeguard one's chastity and modesty. This can only come about when a person regards his own wife as the most attractive woman and let alone his gaze, he doesn't even allow the thought of other women entering his heart.

As a measure of defence against Shaytân's deception, we relate a few words of advice hereunder. Implementing them will, Inshâ Allâh, provide you with a life of marital bliss. Your heart will be at ease and you will also be able to rear your children appropriately and this will entitle you for the divine rewards of this world as well as the next.

1. First and foremost precaution should be the inflexible protection of the gaze from all non-Mahrams (women one is allowed to marry). It appears in a Hadîth Qudsî: "The gaze is an arrow from the arrows of Shaytân. On whomsoever it falls, it produces an image on the heart."

If the eyesight is protected, the heart will also remain pure. So before marriage and after marriage as well safeguard your gaze from falling onto your office secretary, co-workers, female teachers at college, classmates, women in the market place, women of the neighbourhood, sister's friends, all types of cousins, brothers' wives, maids working at home, their daughters, your uncles' wives (your mother's brother's wife, your father's brother's wife), your sisters-in-law young and old, protect your gaze from falling onto these women.

2. A man is deceived only when his gaze falls onto a non-Mahram and he makes no effort to turn away or to close his eyes. This is when Shaytân spiritually contaminates his heart and beguiles him into gawking at her. He appeals to him: "Look at your brother's wife! Isn't she attractive? She wears her clothes with such trendy style. She has such charmingly dense hair." Etc. etc. Then Shaytân makes him recall his own wife. He ponders over her unintentional deficiencies. Her skin colour is dark. She is always untidy and dishevelled. Her clothes are always filthy. Her hair is so lifeless. Etc. So Shaytân will only attempt to depict the relatively admirable features of the non-Mahram whilst attempting to reveal the wife's imperfections in comparison to the other woman. He won't reveal that although the other woman was fair, she was not strikingly attractive. She was dolled up just because she was leaving for an occasion. She doesn't always look like this. Her hair was merely well-coiffed in the latest style and there was nothing essentially attractive about it. On the other hand, your wife may not be as fair, but she is incredibly attractive. Since she was too involved with the kids she didn't get the time to dress up smartly otherwise she is a very elegant dresser. It is just coincidental that she didn't get an opportunity to bath for the second day running. This is why her hair was looking so dull and lifeless. Not only this, she has

such stunning eyes. When she smiles, her teeth sparkle like pearls. Etc. Shaytân doesn't remind you about all these admirable features of your own wife. Nonetheless, if you do come across an admirable feature in another woman, don't ever mention to your wife: "So and so is like this and like that. You on the other hand are like this and like that." Such an attitude will in no way improve her but may ruin your marriage.

3. Finally, we urge you to regard your wife as the best woman around. Bear this in mind at all times. And in order to safeguard the heart from evil thoughts protect your gaze particularly from the non-Mahram relatives living under the same roof as you do. Be rest assured that this will engender the sweetness of Îmân. You will be blessed with the fortune of steadfastness on Îmân. You will be blessed with taking your last breath with Îmân. You will also be protected from marital feuds and bestowed with a life of tranquillity. Also look at the good attributes of your wife and ponder over all her good characteristics. This will engender mutual love between both of you. Your confidence in one another will also get a boost. Happiness will prevail and the new generation will grow up in an exceptional environment and become servants of Dîn, society and country.

Finally, we urge you to recite the following Du'âs abundantly:

رَبَّنَا هَبْ لَنَا مِنْ أَزْوَاجِنَا وَذُرِّيَّاتِنَا قُرَّةَ أَعْيُنٍ وَاجْعَلْنَا لِلْمُتَّقِينَ إِمَامًا ۞

رَبَّنَا لاَ تُزِغْ قُلُوبَنَا بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَيْتَنَا وَهَبْ لَنَا مِن لَّدُنكَ رَحْمَةً إِنَّكَ أَنتَ الْوَهَّابُ ۞

يَا حَيُّ يَا قَيُّوْمُ بِرَحْمَتِكَ اَسْتَغِيْثُ ۞

After every Fard Salâh and after the Tahajjud Salâh implore Allâh ﷻ to protect your eyes from evil glances and your

heart from vile thoughts and plead with Allâh ﷻ to grant love and affection between you and your wife.

Don't Vent the Children's Anger over Your Wife

Sometimes, in spite of advising the child time after time, the child deliberately makes the same mistake. Now this is not the time to employ only love and affection. A bit of austerity and a stern reprimand now would be better for the future. Indefinite kindness would lead the child to believe that he can do as he pleases, father won't take any action. So, where required, a slight scolding is very appropriate.

However, bear in mind that when scolding your children, don't ever rein the wife into it. For instance, the child returns from Madrasah without his pencil or lunchbox. Now you fire up: "You fool! You are losing ten lunchboxes a month! You are insensitive as a donkey! I work my butt off like a dog and you go on pillaging my wealth." The next moment, your anger sways towards the wife: "Both of you, mother and son are absolutely unconcerned about my wealth. Your mother is nonchalant as you are. She has virtually no value for my money." Sometimes, whilst admonishing the children, the husband unleashes a torrent of abuse over his wife saying things like: "This is the result of your upbringing. You are wholly responsible for turning this child into a pathetic useless like this. You gave him all the freedom and showered him with excessive love and compassion. You will see when he grows up; he will abandon you for someone else." Etc., etc.

Remember! Such behaviour does not behove an ideal father. Its repercussions are dreadfully serious. If the wife retorts to your reproach, it will make matters even worse. It will engender love for the mother and hatred for you, the father, or worse still, he will lose all respect for his mother and as he grows up he will reproach his mother just as he saw his father doing.

Now, when you are reprimanding the children and the wife decides to intervene, explain to her privately with love and kindness that admonishing the children is for their own good and her intrusion at that particular moment does not augur well for their future improvement. In spite of your instructions, if her maternal instincts gush forth and she intervenes when you admonish the children, then too don't draw her into your chastisement. Keep your chastisement confined to the children only. Avoid telling her anything. In fact you should praise her in front of the children.

Praise the Mother before the Children

Taking into account a suitable moment, now and again praise the mother in front of the children and also give her due importance in front of them. Occasionally do as she requests you to do. This will increase the children's love for their mother and she will be delighted with you as well. If you intend to rectify a problem, take your wife into your confidence first. Explain to her that you intend to reprimand so and so at a certain time. Request her to remain silent and to avoid an inopportune display of compassion towards the child. Inform her that your anger will only be feigning fury without really getting angry. Similarly, now and again commend her for her cooking in front of her children. "Mashâ Allâh! Mummy has cooked such delicious food today. Son! Make Du'â for her. She goes through so much of effort to prepare food for us." Sometimes, commend her on her tidiness or her efficiency or her regularity or whatever else pleases you. When the children witness the attachment of their parents and the good words they have for each other, it will create a bond of love between them as well. Their love for their parents will develop equally and their admiration for both parents will increase. They will also try to emulate the same loving method of upbringing when they grow older.

If the Wife is Scolding the Children...?

This is a frustratingly trying occasion where a great number of people stumble. When the father witnesses his innocent children being severely beaten or sternly reprimanded by their mother, the father is expected to act with extreme forbearance and self-control. This is one of the occasions Shaytân exploits to bring about a rift between the husband and wife. He attempts to distance them from the mercy of Allâh ﷻ by triggering a conflict between them. First the father's mood bubbles with rage, which in due course overwhelms his senses. Eventually, the idea of rectifying the wife germinates within his heart ultimately leading to chastising her. In the end, all the children are ruined due to the ferocious quarrels between the parents. Now both parents are left perplexed. The father is confounded that he did what he did in good faith and he had no idea that his actions would lead to such a long drawn argument.

So whenever you are faced with such an issue, be alert. Seal off all the avenues Shaytân may creep through. Maintain your reserve even if you are overwhelmed with the children's love and whilst attempting to resolve one problem, avoid creating another problem.

An Arabic idiom reads: *"The donkey set out in pursuit of horns only to return with lopped-off ears."*
It shouldn't be such that your love for your children leads you to be cruel to your wife. You went to put a stop to the problem between the mother and children only to start fighting with the wife. Instead of sorting out one problem you are left with an additional problem.

Some men grumble that their wives are irrational. They are brutal with their children. They treat the children like animals. They have no motherly affection for their own children. They don't take proper care of their children. They are insensitive to their children's need for love and affection. Some husbands even resign themselves into acknowledging

that they can do nothing about their wives' behaviour as they were brought up in a similar environment of ignorance.

Think about it; look at how Shaytân, who is an open enemy of a Muslim prevails in his schemes of deception and trickery. Look at how he kindles the love of the father for his children and subsequently reins in the grandparents as well in his condemnation of her failings.

To such fathers, we humbly appeal for calm and request you to ponder over your situation with an open mind. In fact, you are more in need of reformation. How foolish can a person be? He goes to sort out the problem between his wife and children and here he starts squabbling with her instead. With the aim of preventing his wife from scolding the kids, he himself starts scolding them. Initially, there were two incensed parties. Now there are three. At the outset, Shaytân was arousing two but now he has an additional party to incite. If her sister and mother regrettably overheard the argument, add on a further two to Shaytân's snare.

All the same, it seems rather foolish that the spirit of affection towards the children is responsible for bringing about a spirit of hatred and hostility between the spouses. This is purely a *Shaytânî* deception. So take great care of your domestic affairs and don't allow Shaytân to meddle into your personal affairs. These are rights related to other human beings. A favourable relationship especially with one's kith and kin is of paramount importance and it forms a significant part of our Dîn. Any form of negligence or succumbing to the dictates of the *Nafs* (base self) distances a person from great virtue. Whilst such conduct disgraces him in the eyes of Allâh ﷻ and in the eyes of the people, it also deprives him of tremendous reward.

Be a bit more vigilant about allowing an atmosphere of constant bickering to devastate the household. Avoid

making the house into an image of Jahannam where the poor wife can't even take a breath of peace and where the unfortunate children seem to grow up in an environment of physical and spiritual deprivation. Just be a bit more careful and this, Inshâ Allâh, won't occur.

Another point that requires discussion is that most children are more inclined to their mothers than their fathers. They very well understand the nature of the mother but the moment you rebuke or humiliate their mother, even if it is for their own good, they are bound to deem you a heartless and cruel monster. They will regard you as a man who doesn't allow their mother to rest and they will treat you as a demon who doesn't give them a break. Or worse still, they will regard their mother as a tyrant and the father as an even more brutal tyrant. They are poised to leave home at their earliest opportunity.

To avoid being trapped in Shaytân's deceptive ploys and in order to avoid such dire circumstances, we cite a few strategies that we hope you would ponder over with a clear mind and which you would practically implement. Inshâ Allâh, with the assistance of the Almighty Allâh ﷻ you would be able to take care of your domestic affairs. You will be well sheltered from the deception of Shaytân and your house will become an image of Jannah in this world.

1. The moment you enter home, greet the house people with Salâm. Thereafter perform two Rak'at of Nafl Salâh. *This was also the practise of Hadrat* 'Abdullâh bin *Rawâhah* ؓ. *His wife relates: "Whenever* he wished to *leave home, he would perform two Rak'ât of* Nafl Salâh *and do the same whenever he returned home.* He would *also perform two Rak'ât Nafl Salâh whenever* he entered *the room. He would never abandon this." [Kitâbuz-Zuhd War-Raqâiq of 'Abdullâh bin Mubârak p.776]*

Performance of these two Rak'ât will guarantee you a *great many favourable changes within your home.* A lot

of *Khair* (good) is sure to descend thereon. A great many problems and disasters will fade away. However, ensure that pictures of animate objects are not suspended on the walls of the room you are to perform your Salâh. In any event, ensure that your house is devoid of the calamity of a television set and pictures of animate objects as they prevent the angels of mercy entering the home.

2. When you witness your wife 'bestowing' inappropriate 'titles' upon your children or she is lividly scolding them, engage your heart and tongue in the Zikr of Allâh ﷻ and make Du'â: "O Allâh! Grant my wife the proper ability to advise the children. Also guide my children to abstain from actions that are disturbing to their mother." At the same instance, advise the children: "Son! Look at how much your mother undergoes just for you. You shouldn't do that. It's an evil habit. Good children don't do such things. Stubbornness is an awfully dirty habit indeed. You were supposed to carry the glass properly. Mum is upset because you broke the glass. Mum is asking you so nicely to have a bath but you are so defiant. You don't want to change your clothes or do your homework."

In short, advising the child in this manner would be of a three-fold benefit:

(a) The mother's anger will simmer down.

(b) The child will realise that he is guilty of such a dreadful offence that both his parents are unanimous. Misconduct of a similar nature is sure to earn the wrath of both my parents.

(c) Shaytân is bound to flee with humiliation and defeat from such a household.

3. In such circumstances, advise the wife and advise her again and again. In spite of you alerting her twenty times she persists in maliciously reprimanding or beating the children and she is wholly at fault, there is no other way except to advise her for the twenty-first time. Be

rest assured that if you advised her in the form of good counsel, your counsel is sure to produce a favourable outcome even if it is after some time. However, if your advice is not of this nature, the outcome would, most probably, not be constructive either especially if the wife is short-tempered or mentally immature. If you advise her with a threat at the end, or with unbefitting language or in a thunderous tone or you advise her by recollecting her past slip-ups or you reveal the children's innocence and the mother's absolute guilt or you express the children's major crimes as minor blunders and the mother's slip-ups as major offences or you heap condemnation on the in-laws or you humiliate the wife by describing the morality of your own family, then be prepared for unfavourable consequences. And please, such a manner of advising is no advising at all. So, make a point of advising her with a mild tone and that your words of advice will be just that and nothing more. Remember that going into a fit of fury just when the wife is fuming with rage or to criticise the wife in front of the children is neither healthy for the children nor will it improve the wife's problem nor will such a sorry household attract the mercy and blessings of Allâh ﷻ. Your behaviour will neither improve the domestic environment nor will it allow the children an opportunity to develop their mental and physical capabilities. From whichever angle you look at it, there is practically no benefit in you acting in this repulsive manner. These were some of the problems, which were confined to your own family; wife and children. Imagine if you are living in an extended family or there are a number of family members living under one roof, what would the outcome of such conduct be?

The sisters-in-law from the husband's side as well the wife's side and all the relatives of the wife will make a huge fuss over the lady and her husband quarrelling with each other after he purportedly rebuked her for spanking young 'Âmir

despite the child suffering from a high bout of fever. Or Zainab had injured her leg and in spite of this her mother whacked her. This really irked her husband Ashraf, who in turn viciously attacked her with tongue and hand. As a result, Zainab's mother left her husband and took off for her mother's house. Zainab is gone to her aunt's house whilst her brother Aslam is living with another uncle. This is how the whole family splits up resulting in Shaytân jumping in glee.

Now think about the consequences; Ashraf is unable to take lunch to work as his wife is sitting at her mother's place. The elder son is at his uncle's house, the younger son and daughter are at their aunt's place whilst the youngest is gone with his mother. Now Ashraf has to table board somewhere or he has to eat all over the place. In this bewildering state of mind, he is unable to do any Dînî work or worldly work with due competence. He is perpetually disturbed with his wife's conduct. He wonders: "How miserable! What a nasty wife I have! She has no sympathy for her poor children How strange!" Even whilst performing Salâh, Ashraf is busy thinking about his wife's injustices. The elder daughter is busy writing her examination. The absence of her parents and siblings made the poor girl forget whatever she had learnt. On the other side we have 'Âmir whose spanking brought about this whole dilemma in the first place. 'Âmir is gone to live with his aunt but he could never get along with his cousin Shâhid. Whenever Shâhid would come to visit, he would bully 'Âmir. Now 'Âmir is living at the bully's house. He relentlessly beats up poor 'Âmir. His mother then rebukes or even spanks him for bullying poor 'Âmir. Ultimately, Shâhid's father gets upset with his mother for allowing this calamity to come into his home.

Think about it; just to thwart one smack, how many more smacks came about? So stay alert. Be more vigilant. Be in total control and exercise patience. Only when the wife's

anger cools down should you advise her if you feel it appropriate to do so. And as much as you possibly can, assist her in rearing the children. For instance, you went out visiting relatives. On your return, one of the younger one's refuses to walk and he insists his mother carries him. You are exhausted. Your wife is drained out. The child is howling away and the wife is dragging him along like an animal and screeching at him. Now looking at this scene, one way of addressing this problem is to yell back at her with a whole group of people looking on: "You brute! Why don't you carry him? You can very well see that the child is tired. He is unable to walk. What's there in carrying him?" This is one way of addressing the situation - by humiliating the poor woman. Another way of addressing the problem is to ponder over the situation. "Perhaps I was a bit too quick in getting to the car or bus stop. She is weighted down with quite a bit of luggage. I should have walked with her. Why don't I carry the child myself?" Now when you pick the child up, your wife will be at ease. Her love and honour for you will get a boost and the child will also cease crying. At the same time you will also realize that its no easy task picking the child up and carrying him to the car. Yes, it is very easy to yell at her, to scold her or to vent your anger on her. But when you attempt to pacify a child all by yourself you will appreciate how challenging it is to quieten down a stubborn child.

The wife is busy assisting the children in preparation for the forthcoming examinations. In spite of explaining something repeatedly, the child doesn't understand simply because he is not paying attention to his mother. As a result, his mother smacks him. Now you should lend a hand by placing your hand over the child's head and advising him: "Son! Listen attentively to what your mother is teaching you otherwise how will you ever pass in the examination?" You may assist your wife in whichever way you possibly can. After all, she is saving you a lot in tuition fees. She is safeguarding their precious time as well. Now Shaytân reveals to you only the smack she meted out to the child and he will only make you

focus on the innocent child's weeping. He won't expose to you how she has been exerting herself for the last half hour whilst the child just can't be bothered to pay attention to her.

Why don't you sit with the children for just a day? You won't need just a simple pain-killer. You will certainly require something far stronger. Your wife sufficed with just one smack. Perhaps your punishment would be much more brutal.

Remember! You are unable to manage with the younger children's homework. You are unable to change their clothes. You can't even wash or iron their clothes. You can't even manage without a maid in the kitchen. You are even reluctant to delay your meals (as the wife very often does because of the children). You are unable to administer any medication to the children whenever they fall ill. So think about it, besides creating an atmosphere of hostility and bickering, what else can your actions do?

Reports of such incidents appear before us daily. Since we are affiliated to the Dârul Iftâ, we deal with such problems daily. Madrasah Newtown (Jâm'iah Al-'Ulûmul-Islâmiyyah 'Allâmah Binnori Town) is not only renowned in Karachi but Alhamdulillâh, it is recognised as an accredited institution throughout the world. Apart from questions coming from Karachi, a great number of questions are submitted from other cities and countries around the globe. Most of these queries basically deal with trivial issues which were primarily negligible sparks kindled by Shaytân into gigantic infernos.

So in order to prevent such 'negligible sparks' blazing into 'towering infernos', there is no other way but to address the situation with love, compassion and understanding. Once again, remember that these problems can only be resolved by giving advice and by making Du'â unto Allâh ﷻ.

In spite of your persistent efforts to counsel the wife she fails to mend her ways, don't suppose you can do nothing about her if the wretched woman fails to improve herself. Why don't you think that perhaps your manner of advising her is flawed or perhaps you are compelling her to do something beyond her ability or perhaps you are counselling her at an inappropriate occasion?

4. Finally, all the hearts of mankind are in the absolute control of Allâh ﷻ. You have an excellent time - the last portion of the night - to get up and implore Allâh ﷻ. Beg from Him: "O Allâh! Grant me the ability to counsel others. Bless my tongue with the sweetness of eloquence. O Allâh! Improve my wife's condition. If I am in the wrong, O Allâh! Grant me the ability to understand my errors. O Allâh! Allow my wife and I to take a united stance on decisions surrounding the upbringing of our children." Âmîn.

After making similar Du'âs advise the wife at the appropriate occasions. Advise her employing an assortment of examples and with encouraging words. Make Du'â after this as well. Inshâ Allâh, this would prove to be very beneficial. Although this method of advising is time-consuming and bothersome, its results are encouraging and long-term. The treatment of the illness is all but certain. May Allâh ﷻ guide us onto the right path. Âmîn.

Hereunder we recount, *in his own words*, the story of a man *who abused his wife. May Allâh ﷻ grant us all the ability to take lesson from this incident.*

The Agony of Loneliness

I am a man whom Allâh ﷻ had blessed with everything but I failed to express my gratitude towards Him neither did I appreciate His favours upon me. My father passed away when I was a young boy. My mother taught me to read and

write and with great struggle she made me stand on my own two feet. After securing a well-paid job, as is with mothers the world over, she wanted me to settle down with a family. She showed me a number of prospective brides (in the family) but since I was the first member of the family who was not only handsome and glib-tongued but very persuasive, arrogant and obstinate, I didn't even want to look at my unfortunate relatives. Nonetheless, I eventually saw a girl and just to appease my mother I agreed to marry her which I subsequently did.

Now the girl, whether I liked her or not was another matter but she was very fond of me. She was a highly qualified girl hailing from a very noble family. She was a competent housekeeper and devoted to her responsibilities. She was not exceptionally stunning but a woman of regular beauty. Since she was neither 'the belle of the ball' nor 'the spirit of the party', her value very swiftly diminished before my eyes. Nonetheless, she uttered not a word of my injustices to any member of her family. Just as my mother used to serve me before marriage, this woman would wait on me hand and foot but just as my relationship with my mother was one of indifference, my relationship with her was one of utter nonchalance. To be honest, I really couldn't be bothered about my mother and my wife. Whenever I went to my friends' houses I would become conscious of my own shortcomings.

I was extremely arrogant and self-conceited. Very quickly my wife ascertained my vain disposition. Occasionally, just to jolt me out of my nonchalant attitude, she would furnish examples of other families intimacy with one another. This would infuriate me even more. Whenever the women of my family praised my wife, I was quick to heap condemnation upon her. Whenever my wife spoke about my friend's admirable conduct with his wife, I would cut her off by finding some fault or the other in him and demonise him as

much as I could. I would then discontinue taking my wife to such friends' houses.

In the beginning, she was exceptionally considerate towards me. She handled all domestic as well as outside chores with unrivalled diligence. We had a number of children also in quick succession. For my own comfort, she would sometimes take the younger ones and sleep separately. Due to the extra workload imposed upon her by the children being born in quick succession, if she made a trivial mistake, I would not only verbally hurl insults at her but also physically abuse her in front of my mother and children.

Looking back, I think to myself that people raise animals and they talk to them with such love and compassion. They are always considerate of them. Me on the other hand, I was lost in my own world. I would take advantage of my wife and children but I was of no use to any of them. How my children grew up, when they fell ill, how they recovered? I have no idea whatsoever. I had no sense of running a household. I don't even know when the prices of things escalated. My house folks liberated me from all forms of concern. In spite of this, I considered earning at the office and spending upon them one of my grand favours upon them. Whenever my office colleagues went out on a tour, they would surely take their wives with them but I considered spending upon my wife as absolute wastage. I considered her ailments a psychological problem and overlooked all her medical problems. I wouldn't even bother about getting medical treatment for her. If she was tired or sick and she slept away before me, I would verbally abuse her. Due to her advancing age, when she wanted to distribute part of her household chores amongst the children, I condemned her for shirking her duties. She would often reply: "Who will care for the house once I am gone?" I would retort: "What are you ranting about dying tomorrow, why don't you drop dead now? Nobody will miss you!"

When she fell very ill, instead of attending to her, I was always outside the house wrapped up in looking for another wife. My wife was terminally ill so I decided to go for a second wife. The second wife was indescribably cunning. She was absolutely indifferent to the affairs of the children and the household but she shrewdly took charge of my personal affairs. I ultimately turned out to be a 'slave' to my wife. She had such an overwhelming influence over me that I even started ignoring my own children.

The Almighty punished me in such a manner that when the second wife gave birth she passed away. Although the first one didn't seek a divorce, she went to live with her parents at that time. I begged her to return to take charge of the household and the children. She refused saying: "What am I going to do in a house where my children do not reside?"

Due to his stepmother's frosty conduct and my disregard for him, my only son immigrated to America. In fact he even invited his mother over to live with him. I had one daughter whom my second wife (her stepmother) married off to some old man. They are now settled in Dubai.

Today, due to my evil actions, I am suffering in solitude. My friends and family members despise me and do their best to sidetrack me. This is the outcome of ingratitude, pride and arrogance. Now my only visitors are my ailments. Neither my children nor my relatives wish to have anything to do with me. I can't even afford to employ a nurse to care for me. If committing suicide was permissible, I would have been long gone. Alas! I am suffering the spasms of loneliness! *[Courtesy Daily Jang Newspaper]*

Avoid Faultfinding

Faultfinding, condemnation of others, arrogance, unfair criticism, rivalry etc, are all spiritual ailments that destabilise the blissful atmosphere of the household. Such

spiritual maladies cultivate hatred between husband and wife, between master and servant, between son and father and between mother and daughter instead of love and affection.

Therefore, do your utmost to refrain from such spiritual maladies and after the daily Salâh and Tilâwat of the Qur'ân, plead with Allâh to protect you and all the Muslims from such evil maladies.

Psychologists say that the simplest task in the world is to raise objections against others or to condemn other people's activities. One of the fundamental teachings of Islâm on the contrary, is that instead of condemnation, reformation should be the priority.

Allâh advises:

"Repel (them) with something *Ahsan* (better)."
[Sûrah Hâ Mîm Sajdah verse 34]

In other words, those engaged in inviting towards *Haqq* (Islâm) should repel evil in a favourable manner. Instead of conducting themselves with the concept of "an eye for an eye", they should rather forgive the offender. This is referred to as a *Hasan* (favourable) conduct. An *Ahsan* (most superior) conduct would be when someone acts indecently towards you, you not only forgive him but also shower him with your goodwill. Hadrat Ibn 'Abbâs says that this verse clearly decrees that the person who loses his temper in front of you, exercise patience with him. He, who conducts himself irrationally with you, engage him with tolerance and forbearance. And he who harasses you, pardon him. *[Mazharî from Ma'âriful Qur'ân vol.7 p.653]*

It is mentioned in some narrations that a person once verbally abused or insulted Hadrat Abû Bakr Siddîq. He responded saying: "If you are truthful in asserting that I am an evil and sinful person, may Allâh forgive me. And if

are false in your assertion, may Allâh forgive you."
ariful Qur'ân vol.7 p.653]

…ber of fathers find fault with their children or wives. …do this with the right intention and proper spirit. …aps they criticise the wife or children to bring them onto …ght track or to put things right at home. However, …fathers verbally attack their children and wives just to …vent to the rage of their hearts.

1. Remember, in both circumstances, faultfinding and objecting serves no real purpose other than adding fuel to an intense fire. Sometimes, a spark of criticism snowballs into a raging inferno.

2. A constant barrage of condemnation often leads to peevishness and surliness. Then a person gets into the habit of yelling all the time.

3. The third problem with a critical approach is that when a relentless bombardment of criticism falls on deaf ears, the father just gets tired and keeps quiet. He deduces, what is the sense in me advising them when it doesn't make an iota of a difference. I might as well just leave them all alone. This is how Shaytân flourishes; by creating domestic problems with the aid of petty incidents.

4. A critical approach to everything is bound to strain family relationships to a degree of ceaseless negativity. Not only this, faultfinding deviates from the original problem and devolves into a separate issue altogether. Instead of solving one issue with such an approach, it creates a further three problems and the original problem escalates into an even more serious nightmare. For example, when the children return from school, they negligently dump their shoes, socks, bags, lunchboxes etc. all over the show. Now a sensitive woman, who aside from being

a mother, is responsible for the tidiness of the house, is bound to get upset with this disorderly sight. And in accordance with her customary habit, she starts yelling at everyone. On witnessing this, the husband criticises her and her manner of upbringing. One of the worst detriments of this attitude is that the children turn out to be even more rebellious and disrespectful. The elder sons and daughters imagine their mother to have become exceedingly grumpy. The wife for her part grows frustrated with her husband. The attitude of the wife with her children and her way of treating them corroborates what he really believes his wife to be; a brutal oppressor to her children. A pitiless woman who is a downright nuisance to my children and me. What will her approach be with my parents, my siblings and I, when she can't even compassionately treat her own children whom she carried for nine months and nursed with her own blood? Today the same children are fed up with her.

So remember that faultfinding does not resolve any problem but it actually generates a host of other problems. Ultimately, a number of your household folks will drift away from you. Therefore, ensure you refrain from faultfinding and advise others to refrain as well. We hereunder mention a few strategies that may enable you to refrain from faultfinding. Read them carefully and make Du'â that Allâh ﷻ grants you excellent character, a gentle tone and sweet tongue. Âmîn.

Speak Clearly

"You sleep all day and all night! What's the matter with you? Come on get up now! Your bedroom looks like a lumberyard. Your school uniform is not even ironed. Why didn't you complete your homework and sleep last night? How many times did I warn you about going to toilet before going to

Why don't you listen?" These statements are replete with complains.

To the elder daughter: "I don't wish to see you so irresponsible. Why do you leave your hair on the comb every morning? You comb your hair in the basin and clog the drain up! Why?"

Instead of conversing with the children in this abrasive manner speak with clarity. Avoid speaking in a domineering overbearing manner.

Don't just demand them to do something. Speak to them clearly and unambiguously. For instance, don't just instruct them to set their clothes in their cupboards. You may say: "Set your clothes in your cupboard. Such and such are the advantages of an orderly cupboard. My work will become more manageable and easier. This is sure to draw the pleasure of Allâh ﷻ and it will please me a great deal as well." Instead of demanding: "Don't be late" be more specific. You may say: "Return home immediately after Maghrib Salâh" or "Be home by five thirty." Also detail the advantages of adhering to each of our requests.

Avoid Hurling Accusations

Don't become over-distraught when faced with a problem. Also avoid pointing accusatory fingers at any member of the family blaming him to be the main culprit responsible for the problem. If you are extraordinarily distressed over some issue, make Wudû, perform two Rak'ât of Salâtul-Hâjat and make Du'â unto Allâh ﷻ. Allâh ﷻ Himself instructs: "Seek assistance with forbearance and Salâh."
When confronted with a dilemma of unsolvable proportions, seek the assistance of Allâh ﷻ with courage, self-control and Salâh. Whenever he was faced with a difficulty, Rasûlullâh ﷺ would perform Salâh to seek the assistance of Allâh ﷻ. Without question, all our needs are exclusively in the

absolute control of Allâh ﷻ alone. And in fact what we see accomplished at the hands of people is actually the doing of Allâh ﷻ. Everything occurs at his sole command.

S̲alâtul-H̲âjat is one of the most conducive and tested methods for accomplishing one's needs. It also wards off problems and it is a tried and tested method for making the wife and children more compliant. This is also the experience of the devoted servants of Allâh ﷻ who have been blessed with *Îmânî Yaqîn* (conviction of faith). They found S̲alâtul-H̲âjat to be a key to the treasures of Allâh ﷻ. If you request your wife and children to carry out something after having performed S̲alâtul-H̲âjat you will be even more convinced that nothing lies in the hands of the servants but everything is in the absolute control of Allâh ﷻ. Now when your requests have been carried out, you will also be rewarded for expressing your gratitude unto Allâh ﷻ. This in turn will further increase the favours of Allâh ﷻ upon you. On the contrary, if your requests were not carried out, you would develop a firm conviction that either the non-implementation of the request was better for you or there is some deficiency in your request or you will be amply compensated for it. Owing to you failing to acquire what you requested, Allâh ﷻ will grant you the ability to exercise patience. And the complaint you have against your wife and children will also come to an end. Your heart will be put to ease. Instead of hurling accusations at others, you will bewail your own attitude of faultfinding and unfavourable criticism. This will subsequently lead you to make even more earnest Du'â in favour of your family.

Even after the outcome of an incident becomes evident, then too avoid any form of finger pointing. Avoid hollering things like: "How many times must I tell you? Don't place the glass here! You are wasting so much of water. How many times should I advise you not to waste? The outside tap is leaking for so many days now. Why haven't you done

something about the leak?" Such an attitude is inappropriate.

Likewise, children are disgusted by a domineering attitude. They also hate being told the same thing again and again though the father repeats himself just to make them understand. However, the children become irritated when told to do something over and over again.

Nevertheless, even if you have to instruct your children to do something once, look for an opportune place and time. Recognising the opportune moment and time to carry out something is the most outstanding feature of an intelligent husband and father, a feature that is always favourable to all concerned.

Focus on the Positive

This is one of the most valuable fundamentals, which, if implemented, is bound to increase the admiration of the parent, teacher or any other person of authority. Their subordinates will act in accordance with their wishes. And whilst regarding them as their seniors, the children will also consider them to be their true teachers. In order to cultivate a favourable atmosphere, focus on what is right instead of harping on what is wrong. Forget about brooding on the wrong. Rather explain to the children what is right instead. Draw their attention to what should be done instead of asking them why they did or why didn't they do something. It was the standard practise of the S̲ah̲âbah ؓ that they would "eliminate evil by not mentioning it at all."

When the misdeed is not raised at all, it would automatically fade away. If you wish to eradicate any evil habit from your children, don't even broach the subject. "If a person hurls a stone to get rid of mud, his own shirt will also get soiled with a spattering of mud." So instead of trying to eliminate evil with evil, eliminate evil with good.

The seniors have revealed: "Revive the truth by mentioning it, whilst eliminate evil by not mentioning it."

As Hadrat S'ad ﷺ was setting out for Qâdisiyyah, Hadrat 'Umar ﷺ gave him a number of parting advices. One of which was: "S'ad! The fact that you are the uncle (mother's brother) of Rasûlullâh ﷺ and one of his companions should not cast you into deception. Allâh ﷻ does not eradicate evil with evil but He eradicates evil with goodness. *[Hikâyâte-Sahâbah p.89]*

May Allâh ﷻ grant us – individually and collectively, within our homes and outside the home – the ability to implement these fundamentals. Âmîn.

Forbearance upon the Wife's Indiscretion Elicits Divine Forgiveness

Hadrat Muftî Shafî Sâhib *rahmatullâhi 'alaih* used to say: "It is obvious that the being of Allâh ﷻ is eternal. Hence, everything he has is also eternal. The rewards of your good deeds stored by Him are also eternal. We express words of gratitude upon benefiting from the joy and pleasures of this world. The delights and pleasures of this world will apparently not remain but our expression of gratitude that we uttered will always remain. Tragedy and hardship will not persist. Yes, the words of patience that we utter will take on an existence of perpetuity and on the day of judgement Allâh ﷻ will enumerate each and every good deed and multiply the reward for each one manifold. *[Majâlis Muftî A'zam compiled by Muftî Abdur-Raûf Sakharwî]*

Make a firm resolve that as from today you will exercise tolerance over the wife's mistakes. Make a firm intention: "Whatever happens I will tolerate her slip ups. No matter how grave her errors, I will overlook them because the anguish that I have to suffer for her indiscretions will fade away sooner or later but the virtue of tolerance over this

...ing agony and the virtue of the spirit of forgiveness ... for the pleasure of Allâh ﷻ will remain forever and ... and the reward will be added to my account in the ...eafter."

...nstance, she didn't replace the toothpaste cap correctly ... she is apathetic about conserving electricity in spite of ... drawing her attention to her negligence on numerous ...asions or she failed to change a light bulb in the kitchen ... you subsequently bumped yourself whilst walking into ...e kitchen at night. Now, for the agony you suffered, you ...e her a tongue-lashing and she in turn retorts with an ...en more furious tone. You are bound to seethe with rage ...er her petty annoyance but compose yourself. Exercise ...earance and ponder over the fact that rudeness and ...siveness will not always remain nor will its after-effects ...ure eternity. Think that just because of something as ...evant as her abusive tongue you hurled a heap of abuse ... her. So the sin of vulgarity will rest on both your ...ulders and both of you could suffer loss in the hereafter.

...ever, if you put up with her fleeting bout of abuse and ...u merely responded with "May Allâh ﷻ guide you. We will ...scuss this issue when you calm down", this phrase of Du'â ...l be a source of guidance for her and a source of fortune ... you in the hereafter.

...emember that the impressions of distress and sorrow are ... for a few days only. What will remain eternally will be ...r good and evil deeds.

...drat Maulânâ Mahmûd Deobandî *rahmatullâhi 'alaih* was a ...sident of Deoband. He was an 'Âlim of extraordinary ...sdom. He was a teacher to thousands of 'Ulamâ. He was ... first teacher of Dârul 'Ulûm Deoband whilst Shaikhul-... *rahmatullâhi 'alaih* was his first student. Both, teacher ... student, were responsible for laying the foundation ...e of Dârul 'Ulûm Deoband.

After his death, someone saw him in a dream and asked him how he fared. He replied: "All praise is due to Allâh ﷻ alone. He has pardoned me." When asked what elicited Allâh's ﷻ forgiveness, he replied: "I was neither questioned about my academic talents nor about my educational skills. However, I was informed that my pardon was sustained by a rather unforeseen occurrence. I was told: "One day you asked your wife to prepare rice for you. She inadvertently added a bit of extra salt but you patiently partook of the meal. You didn't mention a word to your wife and uncomplainingly tolerated her indiscretion. You didn't reveal any of this so that she doesn't suffer any form of heartache. You are forgiven merely because of this tolerance you portrayed towards her."

H̲ad̲rat Muftî Shafî Sâh̲ib *rah̲matullâhi 'alaih* says: "These are graceful endowments. When you wish to offer something, even the most insignificant gift can be tendered. A senior 'Âlim of Deoband, Maulânâ Manf'at 'Alî Sâh̲ib was an Ustâd of a great many leading personalities. He was also my father's Ustâd. He unexpectedly passed away in Kânpûr probably of a heart attack. Let alone any close relatives, nobody was with him when he breathed his last. He died all alone as a destitute. One of my colleagues saw him in a dream after his death and asked him how he fared. He replied: "Allâh ﷻ showered me with His grace. Allâh ﷻ informed me: *"You died as a pauper, all alone. We took pity over your condition and pardoned you."* ccasionally this is what happens. *Allâh Ta'âlâ accepts the most seemingly modest actions. Since it is carried out with scrupulous sincerity, Allâh ﷻ accepts it and overlooks all the other sins.*

I mention this (subject on sincerity) repeatedly so that people are not duped into thinking that they can carry out a few trivial tasks and abandon everything else in anticipation of Allâh's ﷻ forgiveness. [From Majâlis Muftî A'zam compiled by H̲ad̲rat Muftî Abdur-Raûf Sakharwî p.402]

...once committed a sin. He went up to a saint and ...ted to committing such and such sin. The saint ...ed: "With the spirit of pleasing Allâh ﷻ, *lovingly feed* ...wife a morsel of food. *Inshâ Allâh, this good deed will* ... the anger of Allâh ﷻ. *Placing a morsel of food in her* ... is a form of charity and charity wards off the wrath of ... ﷻ. Charity also dispels calamity."

Don't Dishearten the Wife

... Muslim should ensure that his walking, eating, sitting, ...ing - in-short all his actions *do not cause inconvenience* ... others. Nobody should be *physically bothered or* ...onally distressed. Think about *it; such people have* ... referred to as *'Ibâdur-Rah̲mân'* or the servants of ...mân. Allâh ﷻ refers to them as "those who tread the ... tenderly. This in no way means that they walk slowly ... ants. It means that they don't put on airs of vanity ...st walking. These people are also described in the ...owing words: "When they are addressed by the ignorant, ... reply Salâm." It means that an ignorant person should ... countered with words of peace. Tyranny should be ...ntered with justice. Allâh ﷻ commends such people; ...ple who tread the earth with humility. They do not ...er anyone. They don't walk with an air of haughtiness. ... walk without driving anyone else out of the way. ...sûlullâh ﷺ further explains this when he said: "A Muslim ... from whose tongue and hand others are protected."

...erally, others are harassed either with the tongue or the ... This is why the hand and the tongue are singled out in ... H̲adîth. Your lifestyle, walking, speaking, everything ... you should not be a nuisance to anyone.

...arly, Rasûlullâh ﷺ is reported to have said: "Îmân ...stitutes seventy different branches. The least of which is ... remove something detrimental from the road." The ...ance of this can be gauged from the fact that this has

been declared a branch of Îmân. Although we ourselves may not be responsible for dumping harmful objects like stones etc. on the road but our *Îmânî* fibre warrants that we remove the item from the road. As for placing such objects on the road ourselves, well, what can we say? Remember! Harassing others is a major sin. Some saints are of the opinion that there is no sin as heinous as breaking another person's heart whilst there is no deed as admirable as bringing joy to a believer. The Qur'ân and Hadith are replete with warnings against harassing others.

Ibn Kathîr writes: "Yûsuf interpreted the dreams of both his co-inmates. He addressed both of them saying that one of you would live in comfort as the servant of the king whilst the other would be executed by hanging. The interpretation was predetermined. It was also predestined that the royal cupbearer would be set free and resume his duties whilst the royal chef would be hanged. However, out of his prophetic affection, Yusuf did not divulge which of the two would be hanged to death as he didn't want them overwhelmed with grief. He merely made a general statement assuring one of freedom and the other of execution." *[Ma'âriful Qur'ân vol.5 p.69]*

In short, Rasûlullâh forbade hurting any Muslim's heart even to the slightest degree. He advised: *"When three people are together, two of them should refrain from whispering with each other lest it offends the third person."* *Although these two people did not verbally abuse or insult the third person but they could hurt his feelings. Hence, he forbade such a scenario.*

It is said of Hadrat Thânwî rahmatullâhi 'alaih that on one occasion he was all alone at home. His wife was gone to one of her relative's homes. Before setting out, she asked Hadrat to open the chicken coop but Hadrat forgot to do so. He performed his Salâh and recited the Holy Qur'ân but his heart was not in it. He wanted to do some writing but the

ject matter just wouldn't come to mind. His mind was a nk. He turned to Allâh and begged His forgiveness. s is when he realised: "Today I didn't let the chickens t. I left them enclosed so Allâh also left my heart osed."

ose who are favoured with insight can't even stand a cken being put to distress. How many hearts do we sensitively subject to abject misery? We don't even rceive the situation. Those saints were people with open arts. The moment they step away from Allâh, they are rceptively drawn to their carelessness.

ah Ta'âlâ commands, don't enter another person's home thout his permission. When you enter, observe Salâm. sit him when it is not his meal or resting times. These are e injunctions of Sharî'ah. Contravention of these rulings is a sin.

he Holy Qur'ân teaches us to abstain from annoying yone. Refrain from displeasing and offending others. One ould make a determined effort coupled with Du'â and a m conviction that he will desist from bothering others. He ould make a firm resolution: "Nobody should be sheartened because of me; either intentionally or intentionally. I should not be a source of causing scomfort to others." Once the conviction is there together th Du'â and a determined effort, Allâh's assistance will e at hand. Be very careful about causing any from of nguish especially to the wife and children. Such a nviction on the husband's part accompanied by Du'â is re to solve a multitude of problems. Some people claim at they had no intention of annoying the other party. It st came to pass. The elders counter: "To assert that they ve no intention is not a fitting excuse. They should form a resolution that they will not annoy anyone." In other s, as far as human rights are concerned, the lack of onally harming anyone is not sufficient but there

should be a firm intention of totally refraining from harming anyone. As in the case of safeguarding the gaze, the saints of Dîn say: "In order to refrain from being classified a sinner, the inadvertent falling of the gaze on women is not a sufficient excuse but there should be a conviction of safeguarding the gaze from falling onto Harâm women. Otherwise every person will allow his eyes to roam around freely and when his gaze lands on non-Mahram women, he will claim that he had no intention whatsoever. So we will respond that when did you make an intention not to see? The claim that these women appeared within your vision without any intention on your part is not a convincing argument. You should also make a firm resolution to ensure that your gaze does not fall onto such women.

One of the casualties of not safeguarding the gaze is that no matter how stunningly attractive your wife is, she loses her appeal in your eyes. One of the deceptive strategies employed by Shaytân to bring about marital dispute is to present the charming nature of other women whilst depicting his own Halâl wife as repulsively unattractive. The only solution to this problem is to vigilantly safeguard the eyesight as well as the sight of the heart so that he doesn't indulge in fantasising about other women.

Avoid Name-Calling

Bear in mind that name-calling or reprimanding in a furious or thunderous bellow offers no hope of resolving an issue. In fact the tyrannical nature of the husband gets temporarily imprinted on the wife's heart and mind. Similarly, she is downright convinced of her husband's foolishness and insecurity. After all, on the basis of a petty issue or without proper investigation, he has already made up his mind that I am a delinquent. This is why he yells at me in front of the children. Firstly, he is not all there and secondly he is more faithless and ungrateful than a beast. From dawn to dusk I labour for him and the children and for a mere indiscretion

he blanks out all my favours and addresses me with terms like "brute, nutty, slothful" etc.

Such taunts are sometimes so indelibly impressed on the wife's mind and heart that she is unable to forget even if she really wants to. Imagine the husband dead and the house folk making funeral arrangements. The wife will also weep bitterly with the other women but even at this woeful moment she can't help but recall specific events that took place between her and her late husband. Just as his death evokes his favours over her, it will also stir up distressing memories of her husband who acted like a wild beast when provoked. He would leap, bite and inflict injury like an uncultivated monster and he would utter whatever comes to mind.

So every Muslim should deliberate and take stock of himself. He should remind himself again and again that although he is a husband, he is first and foremost a human being. He is the best of creations. He is not like a lion, cheetah, snake or scorpion. And not only is he the best of the creation, he is also privileged to be a Muslim whom Rasûlullâh ﷺ referred to as "a person from whom other Muslims are safe (from the evils) of his tongue and hand".

So the wife and children are also included in the word 'Muslims'. A Muslim has no other strategy but to advise and explain. If you counselled your wife ninety nine times and yet she fails to adhere or she nonetheless makes the same mistake, there is no other way but to advise her the hundredth time.

People come to the Dârul Iftâ and bewail that they told their wives a thousand times but she nonetheless refuses to pay heed. Muftî Sâhib then asks: "How long are you married?" Some reply that they are married two years, ten years or twelve years etc. Muftî Sâhib then disputes their claim

saying: "How could you have advised her a thousand times in this short period of time? This is a white lie".

Remember that Shaytân deceives you into asserting that you advised her a thousand times. He leads you to believe: "You advised her a thousand times but the wretched woman just refuses to listen." Why don't you appease yourself with the supposition that there is no other strategy but to advise her once more even though you may have purportedly advised her a thousand times over?

Hadrat Shaikhul Islâm Maulânâ Shabbîr Ahmad 'Uthmânî *rahmatullâhi 'alaih* says: "If *Haq* (the truth) is presented with *Haq* (sincerity of intention) and in a *Haq* (truthful) manner, it would surely leave some impression. Where the statement doesn't leave any impression whatsoever, one of these three factors is lacking. Should one strive to bring about spiritual reformation whilst taking these three factors into account, it will, Inshâ Allâh, make some impression. The addressee will acknowledge the impression and act accordingly. Even if the addressee fails to act accordingly, the inevitable outcome of this would be that he at least profited by gaining proper knowledge." *[Extracted from Majâlis Muftî A'zam compiled by Muftî Abdur-Raûf Sakharwî p.493]*

Dwell on this text very carefully. Go over it once again. This is a statement of an accredited 'Âlim who is hailed as Shaikhul Islâm by Arabs and non-Arabs alike. Hundreds of thousands of people benefit from his Tafsîr (Tafsîr 'Uthmânî) and his commentary on Sahîh Muslim, Fathul-Mulhim.

If you wish to reform the wife, you will never be able to do so by assailing her with thunderous invectives or demeaning names. Strive to employ the appropriate measures of reformation. This will assure you of your own protection as well.

Hadrat Maulânâ Muftî Taqî 'Uthmânî *dâmat barakâtuh* writes in the memoirs of his father: "My father (Muftî Muhammad

...fî Sahib *rahmatullâhi 'alaih*) would often say: "One may ...e admonished only for doing something deplorable. ...monishing someone for doing something that is not ...plorable is deplorable in itself. So those who rebuke ...ers for failing to adhere to non-obligatory etiquette or ...stahabbât are off beam. Yes, undeniably the *Mustahabbât* ...d etiquette should be taught and propagated. They should ...doubt be promoted. If a person omits a *Mustahab*, there ...s no problem in compassionately drawing his attention to it ...private. However, condemning or admonishing him is not ...rmitted.

...father would also say: "People who express annoyance ...criticise others in public over the omission of a *Mustahab* ...re guilty of two offences; firstly they are guilty of criticising ...someone for doing something that is not condemnable and ...secondly they are guilty of using a humiliating approach by ...criticising someone in public. Occasionally, this spell of ...criticism is motivated by vanity or egotism, which is a sin in ...itself.

...e would also say that people who are caught up in this ...ess are generally those whose vision is veiled from the ...ore crucial issues of Dîn. The *Âdâb* (etiquette) and ...Mustahabbât are indisputably much cherished components ...f Dîn. They should be implemented, but some form of ...attitude should be applied. Others should be gently ...persuaded to practice on them but it is downright improper ...criticise others for non-compliance. *[Extracted from Mere Wâlid ...Mere Shaikh Aur Un Kâ Mizâjo Mazâq p.140]*

...hese are the words of the grand Muftî of Pakistan, Muftî ...Muhammad Shafî Sâhib *rahmatullâhi 'alaih*. His words ...present us with a synopsis of Qur'ân, Hadîth, Fiqh and ...Tafsîr. Make Du'â and whenever possible perform two Rak'ât ...of Nafl Salâh and make Du'â: "O Allâh! Eliminate all my evil ...habits and grant me the ability to conduct myself with ...others especially with my wife and children in a suitable ...manner. Âmîn.

Sometimes the husband is worked into a rage over somewhat petty issues especially when he doesn't get what he wants on time. For instance, he is thirsty and he can't locate a glass. You are suffering from a headache. You popped a tablet into your mouth but as you go to the fridge, the water bottle is nowhere to be seen. You go into the bathroom and there's no soap. So on such occasions you will have to restrain your temper and exercise absolute restraint. You should obviously advise your wife but advise her in the proper manner. Firstly, try not to advise her right away but speak to her after the passing of at least three Salâh times. For instance, if you had a problem after Fajr Salâh, wait until three Salâhs elapse in between. You may broach the subject with her after 'Ishâ Salâh. Similarly, if you have a problem after 'Asr Salâh, speak to her about it after Fajr Salâh. However, when addressing her, by no means should you bear down upon her with words like: "How stupid can you be? How many times must I remind you that I want water? Why didn't you leave a tumbler in the room? How spiteful can you be? I told you I am suffering with a stomach ache and I need to each *Kitchri* (rice boiled in split pulse). Why didn't you prepare it for me?"

Instead of assailing her with such distasteful titles and aggressive words, why don't you opt for a more positive approach instead? Whilst waiting for a period of three Salâh times to elapse, ponder over your own shortcomings as well. Perhaps if you mull over this with an open heart and mind, you would realize that it is also your own fault. For instance, why did you pop the tablet first and then look for water? Or why didn't you check if there is a towel or soap in the bathroom beforehand. Etc., etc.

If you had to remind her about preparing your Kitchri a second time, did it wound your self-esteem in any way? She is after all a human being. She is prone to making mistakes. Why don't you imagine: "When I berate her with repulsive

titles like stupid, nutty, cruel, ignorant, worthless, monster etc., I am actually referring to myself".

This is an extremely favourable strategy. You will be blessed with peace and tranquillity. Apart from your domestic squabbles, all your outside problems will also cease. You will be cherished by Allâh ﷻ and admired by His servants.

Hadrat Maulânâ Muhammad Ilyâs Sâhib *rahmatullâhi 'alaih* would often say: "This task can only be carried out by those who regard the errors of others as their own errors and in spite of guiltless, they admit to their own shortcomings and adopt an attitude of remorse."

During his latter years, Hadrat (Maulânâ Ilyâs Sâhib) once came to Lucknow with a Jamâ'at. The Jamâ'at was accommodated at Dârul 'Ulûm Nadwatul-'Ulamâ. Hadrat Maulânâ 'Abdush-Shakûr Sâhib رحمه الله arranged a Jalsah in honour of Maulânâ Muhammad Ilyâs Sâhib رحمه الله at Dârul-Muballighîn Pâtâ Nâlah. Maulânâ Abdush-Shakûr Sâhib رحمه الله sent his younger brother, Hadrat Maulânâ 'Abdur-Rahîm Sâhib to go and fetch Maulânâ Ilyâs Sâhib *rahmatullâhi 'alaih*. Maulânâ 'Abdur-Rahîm Sâhib was delayed for some reason and as a result, Maulânâ Ilyâs Sâhib landed very late at Pâtâ Nâlah. A number of guests waited for Maulânâ at the Jalsah but returned in vain when they realized he is not going to arrive on time. When Maulânâ 'Abdush-Shakûr Sâhib complained to Maulânâ Ilyâs Sâhib about his extraordinary delay, Maulânâ instantly replied: "I am sorry. I was at fault." Hadrat thereafter addressed his colleagues: "I could have absolved myself by laying the blame on his younger brother but it is better to accept blame for it even if we are not guilty. This is the type of temperament this work (of *Tablîgh*) demands." He would also say: "The nature of this work is such that one has to put up with one's own as well as others." *[Extracted from Irshâdâto Maktûbât, Hadrat Maulânâ Shâh Muhammad Ilyâs Dehlawî rahmatullâhi 'alaih]*

will become accustomed to it. If you resort to beating the child, he is prone to become audacious. This may even lead to brazen insolence. When he intends to do something he will boldly go ahead because he knows that the worse that can happen is that he will only get a beating for it.

11. Don't ever comply with all his demands. This could make the child arrogant. Submitting to all his whims could adversely affect the child's distinctive emotions of tolerance, sympathy, unity, harmony etc.
12. When the child wishes to say something to you, give him your undivided attention so that when you respond he will also give you his undivided attention in return.
13. Do not expose the shortcomings of one child before another child as this may develop pride in the other child.
14. Avoid praising one child in front of the other as this could lead to him developing an inferiority complex.
15. Endeavour to develop self-confidence in the child. Give the child an opportunity to make simple decisions. For instance, the brand of ice cream he would like or whether he would like his egg as an omelette or fried sunny-side up. In other words, allow him to make his own decisions in such insignificant matters.
16. *Allow the children to participate in some basic functions as this would bolster their self-confidence.*
17. *Don't ever attempt to terrify the child with some phantom monster or in any other way whatsoever. For instance, watch out! The devil will come for you. The ghost will take you away. If you do this, I will beat the hell out of you. Etc., etc.*
18. *Be very particular about the child's diet. Ensure that the diet does not consist of fatty, rich or indigestible foodstuff.*
19. *Frequently examine the child's gestures and movements, his eyes, skin, extraordinary swelling of* the stomach, body temperature, colour of his urine and faeces etc. Also observe his crying, lethargy and listlessness as well; as the child is unable to communicate his feelings in the way adults do. These are some of the symptoms of either his illness or his well-being.
20. Avoid providing the child with too may toys especially toys of animate objects like puppets, dolls etc. Yes, provide them with toys that are physically beneficial or mentally challenging and toys that can keep them occupied.
21. Avoid engaging in imaginary or fictitious conversations with the child. Rather apprise him of the realities of things.
22. Always speak the truth with the child. Enable him to distinguish between the truth and falsehood by himself.
23. Avoid deceiving the child in any way. Perhaps he will deceive you when he grows up.
24. Develop a fixed routine for his daily chores; maintain a preset time for eating, sleeping, reading, playing etc.
25. Provide a bedroom that is spacious, well ventilated and clean.
26. Teach the child to keep his soiled clothes etc. in a designated place and not strewn about the room. For instance, teach him to take off his shoes here and place his socks there.
27. Avoid maintaining an intellectual distance between yourself and the child. Maintain a friendly relationship with the child.
28. Avoid scolding the child in front of others, especially in front of other children his own age. Also refrain from counting out his shortcomings before other children as this injures his self-esteem.
29. Do not allow a child of seven to sleep in the same bedroom as you. Treat all your children equally.

Contemplate over this. Once a person searches for his own shortcomings, Allâh ﷻ will develop such characteristics of popularity within him that would enable him to execute the work (of inviting towards Allâh ﷻ).

Develop a Bond of Friendship with the Children

The aim of education does not revolve around a preset syllabus that you make the child commit to memory and ensure that he passes in the examination. In fact it is the bounden duty of the father that together with the child's academic life, he should also tend to his practical life. He should bring him up in such a manner that the child is capable of facing up to the most challenging tests and the most demanding conditions.

To this end, the child has to have a degree of self-confidence. He should be able to carry out all his work with self-assurance. It is rather difficult for the child to develop self-confidence without a warm, loving and favourable domestic environment. This is why the home environment should be favourable, sympathetic and informal to the child. It is awfully improper to censure or beat the poor child for every triviality. This creates insecurity and anxiety within the child. As a result, he may not be able to do anything with confidence. So the father, in view of his children's welfare, should provide constructive entertainment and educational activities to his children. These activities should be able to steer the child's nature in the right direction. Moreover, these activities should also be able to pacify their zeal without depriving them of their needs.

Bolster the child's sense of security. Make him feel that his word carries some weight in the home. Give him the assurance that he is cherished and he occupies some position of importance in the household. With this purpose in mind, allow the children to express their feelings and sentiments, which they are unable to express before their

friends either due to their weakness or due to some other reason. Occasionally, make them sit with you. Talk to them. Listen to what they have got to say. Include them in your conversation in a very relaxed manner. Tutor them to speak in a manner warranted by the occasion. Give their petty problems an ear and demonstrate your interest in them. Join them in their sporting activities. Mingle with them in such a manner that they take you as a sincere friend and they are able to communicate whatever they wish without formality. In this manner you will be able to solve their problems more easily. This will also protect them from a host of bizarre absurdities and imprudent ways.

However, be very careful if you receive a report of your child's misconduct or shortcoming. Don't just sweep it under the carpet or else his behaviour will only worsen. Call him up in private and point out his erroneous ways to him. Advise him in an appropriate manner without humiliating him in any way. You may also prohibit him in a manner that is not sensitively offensive to him so that he doesn't hide anything from you.

Rasûlullâh ﷺ was exceptionally fond of children. He would often carry them on his shoulders and walk about. However, if the child did something morally or religiously inappropriate, he would admonish the child but in such a manner that the child is not offended. It is mentioned in the Ahâdîth that Hadrat Ummu Salmah's *radiallâhû 'anhâ* son, 'Umar ؓ, a son from a previous marriage was once partaking of meals with Rasûlullâh ﷺ in the same plate. Since he was still a young boy at that time, his hand was busy wandering around the plate. Rasûlullâh ﷺ admonished him right away, but in this manner: "Son! Recite Bismillâh when partaking of meals. Eat with the right hand and eat from the side that is in front of you".

Look! He reprimanded the child but he didn't mention the child's misconduct directly. He initially mentioned two

etiquettes before actually dealing with his indiscretion. This stance rectified the problem without insulting the child in any manner.

Remember! Don't be so heartless that the child regards you as a tyrant. Also don't be so informal that you verbalize whatever comes to mind thus undermining the sacred father-son relationship.

May Allâh ﷻ grant all of us the divine guidance to rear our children correctly. Âmîn.

Select Upright Friends for Your Children

It is an established fact that companions leave an indelible impression on a person. If a companion is decent with upright morals, a person is more inclined towards piety and performing good deeds becomes easier. He becomes innately vigilant of performing evil. Rasûlullâh ﷺ has also revealed this fact in the following words: "A person is on the creed of his companion. So a person should examine who he befriends." [Mishkât vol.2 p.427]

In another Hadîth, Rasûlullâh ﷺ further elaborates on this point in the form of a practical example. He says: "A pious friend can be likened to a musk merchant; you will either purchase musk from him or he will perhaps present some musk to you or at least you will not be deprived of the fragrance emanating from him. On the contrary, an evil friend is like a blower of a blacksmith's furnace; even if a glowing ember doesn't burn your clothes the rank odour is bound to get you." [Mishkât vol.2 p.426]

So it is the responsibility of the father that he keeps an eye on his children's companions. He should discourage forming friendships with children who are a menace to either the morals or the behaviour of his children. The father should pursue morally upright friends for his children and try to form a bond of friendship between them. He should also

make Du'â for good friends. Get the wife, the children's mother, to make Du'â for them as well: "O Allâh! Grant our children pious friends and protect them from evil friends. Âmîn."

You are well aware of the attributes required for a friend. However, as a reminder, we mention some of them hereunder. Before mentioning these attributes, let us reiterate that a Dînî (religious) environment has a very great impression on the child. Therefore, strive to develop a Dînî environment for your children. This can only be achieved if all the members of the household are Dînî-conscious because a child grasps more from watching than he does from listening.

The fundamental characteristics of a companion should be:

1. The companion you wish to pursue for your child should be around the same age as that of your child. A big age difference is detrimental to the child.
2. The friend's parents should also be Salâh-conscious and upright. They shouldn't have a television and other such obscenities at home. Their standard of living should be on par with yours. Friendship with a child hailing from a relatively more affluent household is not appropriate.
3. The companion should be scrupulous about his Salâh, Saum (fasting) and other such Shar'î injunctions and he should encourage others to do the same.
4. In the case of daughters, get the wife to search for such friends who are Hijâb (pardah) conscious and vigilant of the other Shar'î injunctions.
5. An important characteristic of a friend is that if he observes a shortcoming in one of his friends, he should not be one who goes about publicising this nor should he readily condone what he does but he should strive to ward off the shortcoming with affection and love.

If you pursue a friend with the aforementioned characteristics, we hope to Allâh ﷻ of an exceptionally favourable outcome and your child will be an individual of outstanding character. Nonetheless, just as good friends are favourable to the child so are evil friends detrimental to him. Therefore, make an all out effort to discourage bad company. Also regulate the times they visit their friends. Ensure that they are home by Maghrib time at the latest.

Child Supervision

"Children are the masons of the nations." Everyone has heard of this adage but very few people realize its significance. Have you ever deliberated over this saying? How can young children ever be masons of the nations?

When a person plants a seed into the ground, morning and evening he makes Du'â and he keeps a vigilant eye over the area he has planted the seed. Now when a few days later, a small shoot sprouts up, this person is unable to contain his pleasure. He then diligently attends to the sapling. He waters it with care, places fertilizer around it, protects it from other animals and birds and he also continues to make Du'â for it. The same sapling in due course develops into a gigantic tree whose cool shade and breezes are a source of mercy to travellers whilst the tree itself is a vital source of nourishment and food. It absorbs carbon dioxide and it also assists in acting as a barrier against floods, heat and dust.

In the same manner, the future of a nation is linked to its new generation. Children are the masons of the future. Healthy children contribute to a healthy nation and a healthy society. Today's children are custodians of the future. As they grow into adults of tomorrow, the same children will be guardians of the nation and protectors of Dîn. This is why it is so vital to take good care of the children's health. In fact, even before they are born, their health should be given due consideration. A healthy body reflects a healthy mind.

Together with their physical health, their psychological well-being should also be taken care of.

In order to maintain their physical and psychological well-being and in order to maintain a balanced personality, both parents should concentrate on the following elementary regulations:

1. Pay meticulous attention to the child's cleanliness and tidiness.
2. It is of vital importance that the child wears clothing that is loose fitting, comfortable and clean.
3. Clothe the child in accordance to the weather.
4. Always choose light-coloured clothing. Since children are naturally weak and frail, 'weaker' colours are more appropriate for them.
5. Never yell at your children. Speak to them slowly in a gentle tone and in a manner that is easy for them to understand.
6. Develop a sense of responsibility within the children. This can be achieved by making the child look after his own things and by making him carry out his own work. This will diminish his sense of indifference to some extent. For instance, when sitting down for meals, make the child lay the *dastarkhân* (table-cloth). Make him clear up after meals. Encourage him to be clean and explain the advantages thereof.
7. Always employ words of respect when conversing with the child.
8. Refrain from scolding and admonishing the child relentlessly.
9. If the child makes a mistake or he breaks something valuable, explain to him with a lot of love and affection that he should be more careful in the future. If you resort to scolding and beating you are surely not going to recoup your loss but the child will develop a dislike for you.
10. Always refrain from beating and rebuking the child. If you go on scolding the child, in all likelihood the child

30. The importance and advantages of the aforementioned guidelines cannot be disputed but remember that with physical and psychological supervision, a religious inclination is also indispensable. Make the child aware as to what his religion teaches him. From an early age, try to instil a habit of performing the five daily Ṣalâh and the recitation of the Holy Qur'ân.

If the children are governed in accordance to the aforementioned principles, it would be a favour upon a generation, a favour upon society. To some extent, society's evils like mutual hostility, strained relationships, disproportionate levels of poverty and opulence, class struggles, self-indulgence, malice etc. can be eradicated. Only correct supervision will make the children the finest architects of the nation's future.

Never Overlook the Child's Abdominal Complaints

Generally, mothers detest the children making such excuses to miss school. They consequently, send the wailing child off to school where he is unable to concentrate on his studies. Bear in mind that when the child complains exclusively of a stomach-ache, do not overlook it. It is not necessarily a pretext to avoid school.

Children are more prone to suffer more from abdominal pains than adults. Perhaps the child is unable to express himself appropriately. In such cases, the child requires a complete medical examination. A blood test and urine test is quite effective in ascertaining the problem. Such tests will provide some indication of bladder infection or 'low-blood pressure' etc.

There could be a number of other causes of abdominal pain, for instance, inflammation of the lymph nodes, infection of the throat, poor diet, allergic reactions to dairy products or

at etc. Other possibilities include ulcers, gallbladder ction and tuberculosis. Bacterial infection also cannot be d out. However, this in no means that abdominal pains restricted to physical causes. According to some chologists, quite often, acute pain could also be linked to re psychological disorder or to distress. However this in way indicates that the child's pain is merely a chological problem. Dejection or emotional trauma ught about by anxiety either in school or at home could be a cause of physical pain. A pallid complexion, dness of the stomach, nausea or constipation are not ing symptoms. Some children complain of stomach-ches accompanied by leg pains or headaches. We have also ard of hereditary headaches affecting part of the head.

search has shown that children whose parents or other usehold members take a keen interest in resolving the blems of the children or they make the children feel that are never alone, such children triumph over their blems more remarkably than other children.

multitude of medical tests were carried out on a certain d but all proved negative. Later it was established that e of the main reasons for his pain was that his classmates re harassing him. He was a butt of all the jokes of the ssroom. When the parents and teachers realized this and y made a concerted effort to eliminate the problem, the o recovered from his abdominal pains that were brought t by psychological trauma.

milarly, drinking less water, failing to urinate when the ed arises or failure to wash thoroughly after attending to call of nature could also cause ill health. Develop the it of making them drink a glass of water the moment rise in the morning. Also ask them to drink water now again. Also apprise them of the harms of failing to go to toilet whenever the need arises. Explain to them that a habit could be unhealthy for them and it is a bad

habit to suppress this urge. Even Islâm disapproves of this habit. This is why Islâm enjoins delaying the Salâh when confronted with the urge of attending to the call of nature. Similarly, pouring water thoroughly after urinating and cleansing the body meticulously is a sign of good health and purity.

Similarly, you and the children should drink only boiled water at home. Prevent the children from consuming betel-nut (pân etc.). The constant use of betel-nut could lead to a number of fatal illnesses.

Prevent children from developing an addiction of chewing gum. The constant chewing of gum depletes the saliva of the mouth. This saliva plays a vital role in swallowing and digestion of food.

Sweets of a substandard quality are responsible for oral decay. The consumption of too many sweets compounded by poor oral hygiene is set to ruin the child's pearly white set of teeth. Ensure that the children eat sweets manufactured by a reputable company only and that they brush up afterwards. Always avoid products containing artificial colourants. Such products tend to act as poisons when they reach the stomach.

Your Child can become a Perfect Individual

When the child comes into this world, the focus should be on how best to rear the child physically, mentally and psychologically.

When the child starts talking, don't ever teach him nasty words. Quite often, members of the household fondly teach the baby a number of nasty words. Now when the child repeats the words in parrot-fashion, everyone is thrilled to hear it. They sometimes even request the child to recap on what he just said. This gives the child the impression that he

is doing something acceptable but when the same words are repeated in front of a host, the family members are put to shame. So start the child off with good, pleasant words.

For instance, if one of the elder cousins or siblings dubs one of the younger children as 'crazy', the baby mimics this and cries out: "cazy, cazy". Now all spectators, just to add a bit zing to the gathering, prompt the child to say it again and again. The parents should explain to the child that such words are foul and inappropriate.

Similarly, when you have guests, don't ignore your children whilst entertaining your guests. In fact, you should take the child's full name and introduce him to the guest. This will provide the child some feeling of self-worth.

When seated with your guests and the child turns up to ask something, don't chastise him. Put your conversation on hold and attend to the child. Respond to his question and put him at ease.

Don't mention any of the child's evil habits to anyone you meet. When the child learns that one of his shortcomings is being mentioned to others, he will get the impression that it is something favourable. Now instead of abandoning the habit, he will strive to uphold it.

Don't ever mention the failures of the child before everyone and anyone. This will certainly devastate the child's sense of self-esteem.

Make a big thing of the child's most insignificant achievements. This will boost his self-confidence and inspire him to perform better in the future.

Whenever the school arranges a "parent's day", make sure you attend. Your participation will enhance his sense of security and self-worth. Avoid comparing your child to other

children. Firstly this cultivates feelings of revulsion for you and secondly, you have no idea to what extent his personality is bruised.

Applaud the child openly before guests and other people. This is the simplest method of boosting the child's confidence. Don't ever converse with the child in an abrupt or snappy manner.
Relate to the child stories charged with valour and heroism. This will stamp out anxiety and fear.

Keep an eye on the child's friends. What sort of family do they come from? What is their temperament like, etc.? Ensure that his friends are essentially of the same age group.

After school, ensure that he spends as much time as possible at home because if he learns one good thing outside, he is sure to pick up two bad things as well. Take out a bit of time to play with the children.

Commend the achievements of the child because every child craves praise. So why deprive the child of this pleasure? Within your financial limitations, allow the child to purchase what he wants. Don't ever try to force your preferences down his throat. Today, allow them to take minor decisions so that they are confident in taking major decisions in the future. Allow the child to make a decision with confidence.

Refrain from carrying out all the child's work yourself. If you do all his work, it does not bode well for his future. Develop in them the habit of carrying out a few minor chores at home. This will improve their sense of responsibility and it will keep them on the ball when they grow up. Always advise them to respect their elders and to show kindness to their juniors.

...u confirm your intellectual ability and practice upon the ...rementioned guidelines, be rest assured that your child ... turn out to be a man of a flawless and confident ...sonality. Surely this will also please you because the ...dren's accomplishment is unquestionably the outcome of ...e parents' upbringing.

...ed Them a Hearty Breakfast under Your Supervision

...e *Hakims* (doctors) regard breakfast as an enormously ...ealthy and beneficial meal. If the child has a good ...reakfast, he will, Inshâ Allâh, remain healthy. And a ...ealthy body produces a healthy mind. The same mind goes ... to become a source of worldly and religious ...complishments. So spend upon yourself and upon your ...e and children from whatever Allâh ﷻ has bestowed upon ...ou. Instead of squandering your money on useless ...uildings, clothing and ornaments, use the same money to ...y fruit and other nutritious food. Also rear the children in ...ch a manner that they spend on themselves and upon the ...or as well.

...press upon the children the importance of breakfast. ...ke sure that they don't leave home for school or ...drasah etc. without breakfast. Also make them learn the ...â to be recited after breakfast (and other meals). In ...der to develop the habit, listen to them reciting the Du'â. ...e Du'â after meals is:

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِیْ اَطْعَمَنَا وَ سَقَانَا وَ جَعَلَنَا مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِیْنَ

...l praise is due to the being Who has provided us with food and drink and made us Muslims. *[Ibnus-Sunnî p.158]*

...ter staying hungry all night long, breakfast is essential as ...e stomach was empty for an extended period of time. ...reakfast provides some strength to the mind as well. At ...ight, the glucose level of the body is relatively reduced.

This is why the glucose level needs to be replenished in the morning. Glucose is an important source of energy for the memory. This is vital for school children and industrious people.

According to doctors, breakfast confirms its effectiveness very swiftly. It boosts mental performance. According to experts, bread made from wheat, – referred to us as brown bread – other grains and food high in fibre helps in digestion and reduces constipation. The daily use of wheat fibre eliminates the risk of cancer of the colon.

One of the excuses people tender for skipping over breakfast is that they just don't feel like eating whatever is available for breakfast. Some people go to bed very late at night and get up feeling dreadfully sleepy. As a result, they are unable to have breakfast. This is also very unhealthy.

If you are unable to convince the child to have a hearty breakfast daily, at least feed him a glass of juice. After a few days, add on a slice of toast and continue with this until the child reaches the proper weight. For breakfast, always have a variety of foods on hand so that you may alternate with a range of choices. If you tend to run late in the mornings, make preparations from the preceding night. Apart from this, milk, yoghurt, cheese, fruit, fruit juices etc. also form part of a healthy diet.

Make use of all these blessings yourself, provide them to your children as well and express your gratitude to the true benefactor (Allâh ﷻ). Concern yourself with pleasing the provider of these blessings. We should not do anything that displeases Him. Imagine what arrogance; we consume the blessings of the Almighty and instead of obeying Him, we apply the nourishment we gain from His provisions in His disobedience. What a pity! No! This should never be the case. Repent today and express your gratitude for every blessing by saying *Alhamdulillâh* repeatedly and earnestly

comply with Allâh's ﷻ commandments. Convince the children also to abide by the commandments of Allâh ﷻ.

Think about it; the Lord of the worlds has allowed you a peaceful night's sleep. He aroused you in good health and He provided you with a host of blessings for breakfast. Now you are negligent with your Fajr Salâh or you abandon it altogether. What a scale of deprivation? In fact, the day you miss your Fajr Salâh with Jamâ'at in the Musjid or the day the grown-up girls fail to perform their Fajr Salâh at home, the body should be punished by depriving it of breakfast. Today, O body! You are not entitled to breakfast. Today you failed to submit to the proclamation of the true owner.

If you find it difficult to rise for Fajr Salâh, reflect over this; if the president or the prime minister of the country summons you to receive an award at four o' clock in the morning, will you still refuse? Obviously not! Here the greatest of rulers is beckoning us to respond to His call of *Assalâtû-Khairum-Minan-Nawm! Assalâtû Khairum-Minan-Nawm!* (Salâh is far superior to sleep). So we should diligently perform our Fajr Salâh with Jamâ'at and make the grown-up children do the same and after this should we partake of breakfast. Then only will this breakfast be a source of energy and nourishment otherwise the same breakfast will, Allâh ﷻ forbid, be a source of illness and disease.

Make the child have breakfast at home. If the child takes his breakfast to school, he will either eat it whilst walking to school, which is unhealthy, or he will have it in front of the other children at school. Although the other children had breakfast at home, it is but a natural tendency of childhood to cast covetous glances at other people's food. They will also want to eat. Perhaps there are some children in school who are not financially well off. Their parents are barely able to afford their tuition fees and they are unable to provide what your child is busy munching away. This will throw

these poor innocent children into a state of depression and an inferiority complex is bound to take root.

So try to give them their breakfast at home. Some households hand over this responsibility of making breakfast for the schoolchildren to their maids or men-servants. This is absolutely inappropriate. Servants generally are irresponsible or indifferent to such issues because they lack the parental affection for the children. Let alone breakfast, they won't be able to do the most trivial of tasks for the children as affectionately as the parents would do. Sometimes the mother's behaviour is also as nonchalant as the maid either because she is still catching up on her sleep or she is disgusted by her husband's ruthlessness. So the parents should themselves give the children breakfast with a lot of love and affection.

What is Good Food?

Good food is not only sweetmeats, cakes and pastries. Good food does not constitute samoosas, kebabs, ice creams and fizzy drinks. Good food is also food that contains proteins and carbohydrates. In other words, we should ensure our daily diet consists of milk, yoghurt, meat, grains, cereals, fruit and vegetables. This really is 'good food' and such a diet would also keep us healthy, Inshâ Allâh.

Don't belittle any type of simple vegetable, fruit, lentil or grain. Allâh ﷻ created everything for some benefit or the other. For instance, with the influence of Allâh ﷻ, mulberry prevents diseases of the throat. Radish improves the functions of the liver and spleen. Carrots strengthen the eyesight. Pawpaw is good for the stomach. Citrus fruits like lemons and oranges prevent a number of illnesses. Garlic purifies the blood. Onions exterminate bacteria. Ginger keeps the stomach healthy. Mint assists in food digestion. Soya prevents inflammation of the stomach. The sesame seed fortifies the body. Green chillies have a lot of vitamin C

which assists in fending off illnesses like the common cold, influenza etc.

Choosing a Spouse for the Child

From the very beginning the parents should make a lot of Du'â for a favourable match for their children. They should take their children's names and make earnest Du'â for them after the Salâh and after their Zikr and Tilâwat.

When the children reach a marriageable age, don't delay in getting them married. In appears in the Hadîth, Hadrat Abû Hurairah ؓ reports that Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "When someone sends a proposal and you are comfortable with his piety and character, (accept the proposal) and get him married otherwise strife and devastation will overcome the earth." *[Mishkât vol.2 p.267]*

In Mazâhirul-Haq, the commentary of Mishkât, it is stated: "If you fail to do this and rebuff this man's proposal in anticipation of a more noble or wealthy proposal – as is the custom of worldly people – a number of women will be left unmarried whilst a number of men will be roaming about as bachelors. Subsequently, not only will immorality and vice thrive in society but the guardians of these women will be subject to a range of shameful and humiliating treatment. Now these guardians will physically retaliate against those who subject them to such dishonour. Sooner or later such revolting hostility will lead to widespread mayhem and devastation." *[Mazâhire-Haqq vol.3 p.258]*

Islâm disapproves of people especially Muslims who refrain from marriage without any valid Shar'î excuse. Marriage has been emphasised in no uncertain terms. Terms of severity were applied to exterminate all sin and strife at the very root and also to shut all avenues of immodesty, evil glancing and adultery. In order to safeguard the inestimable capital of chastity and morality, Islâm has laid considerable emphasis on the institution of marriage. In fact, whilst

advocating the importance of Nikâh, Allâh ﷻ also assures us of the prosperity that follows. Allâh ﷻ declares in the Holy Qur'ân: "If they are poor, Allâh will make them affluent with His grace. And Allâh is sufficient all-encompassing, all-knowing." *[Sûrah Nûr verse 32]*

In addition to this, if you adhere to the forthcoming points of advice, you will not be disappointed: When dealing with a marriage proposal of your son or daughter, always consult other people as well. Sharî'ah has attached great emphasis to *Mashwarah* (consultation). In the cause of describing the characteristics of the true believers, Allâh ﷻ mentions in the Holy Qur'ân: "Their affairs (are handled by) mutual consultation." *[Sûrah Shûrâ verse 38]*

Similarly, it is mentioned in the Hadîth that when a nation executes something with mutual consultation, they are guided onto the right path. *[Al-Adab Al-Mufrad]*

It appears in another Hadîth that Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "As long as your rulers are the best of you, your wealthy are generous (they spend on the poor and in the path of Allâh) and your affairs are executed with mutual consultation, until then the surface of the earth would be better for you. (In other words, it would be better to live.) However, if your rulers are the worst of people, your wealthy are miserly and your affairs are controlled by women (and they do as they please), then the interior of the earth would be better for you. (In other words, you are better off dead than living in such evil times.)"

Hadrat 'Abdullâh bin 'Umar ﷺ *narrates that* Rasûlullâh ﷺ *said: "He who intends to do something but only does so after consulting others, Allâh* ﷻ *will guide him towards the most suitable course." In other words, Allâh* ﷻ *will set him on a course that would ultimately be best for him.*

also consult with the wife. Just as you are the father, she is after all the mother of the child. Even if she is academically or intellectually inferior to you, then too make sure you consult with her. The magnitude of consulting her can be gauged from the issue of weaning the child. When the child is to be weaned before the prescribed period, Islâmically both parents are required to resolve this issue by mutual consultation and harmony. Allâh ﷻ says: "If they (husband and wife) wish to wean (the child) with mutual satisfaction and consultation, there is no sin upon them both." *[Sûrah Baqarah verse 233]*

The grand Muftî of Pakistan, the late Muftî Muhammad Shafî Sâhib *rahmatullâhi 'alaih* writes in his commentary: "If the parents of the child, after mutual satisfaction and consultation decide to wean the child before the normal suckling period of two years – either due to the mother's distress or the child's ill health – there is no problem with this. The condition of 'mutual satisfaction and consultation' is stipulated so that in weaning the child, the parents act in the best interest of the child and not make the child a platform of their hostile confrontations." *[Extracted from Ma'âriful Qur'ân vol.1 p.579]*

Ponder over this; in order to reduce the suckling period, the Qur'ân advises mutual satisfaction and consultation between both parents. You can very well imagine then the importance of mutual consultation when it comes to the issue of the children's marriage proposals. Especially in the case of girls, consultation is absolutely essential. The father should not attempt to exclusively enforce his own will but he should also consult with the girl's mother. This is why the Hadîth enjoins: "Consult the womenfolk in regards to the affairs of their daughters."

This is why *Mashwarah* (mutual consultation) is more important then *Istikhârah*. Nonetheless, *Mashwarah* should obviously be sought from people who are familiar with such matters. In other words, the person from whom *Mashwarah*

is sought should be intimately familiar with such issues. Together with this, the person should also be religious, intelligent, experienced and trustworthy. Such people, inspired by their sincerity, will be able to offer you their proficient *Mashwarah* on the basis of their comprehensive experience whilst assuring you of their confidence at all times.
Similarly, consult with the elders of the family as well. Solicit their opinion about sending a proposal to so and so. Also get the opinion of the families the girl's siblings are married into. Consult with them as well.

There is a story of a person who was overwhelmed by a spirit of benevolence. So he decided to tie the knot between two stars. He thought it a noble idea to marry off *Surayyâ* with *Suhail* (names of stars). However, unlike us who do as we please, this man was conscious of the importance of *Mashwarah* and he went to seek a sage's advice. The sage remarked:
"O you who wishes to tie the knot between Surayyâ and Suhail, By Allâh! How can they both bond with one another? Don't you see the incongruity between them? Surayyâ glows higher up towards Syria, Whilst Suhail is lower down towards Yemen."

So the compatibility between the boy and girl is also vital. Is the boy or girl compatible to our family or not? A little bit of disparity between the families is fine but where the disparity between the families is extraordinarily obvious, a match should be avoided. For instance, the boy is extremely wealthy whilst the girl is dreadfully poor or vice versa or the girl is very well educated whilst the boy is absolutely ignorant or the girl is an *'Âlimah* whilst the boy is unable to recite the Holy Qur'ân.

The compatibility of both parties should certainly be assessed. The groom's parents should ascertain the girl's

family background. What type of household does she hail from? What is the condition of her mother, sisters etc.

Now when you have all opinions before you, make Du'â unto Allâh ﷻ to assist you in making the right decision. Thereafter recite the Du'â of *Mashwarah*, take all views into account and act on the opinion you think is most appropriate. If Allâh ﷻ wills, your decision will certainly be imbued with *Barkât* (blessings).

The Du'â of *Mashwarah* is:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اَلْـهِمْنَا مَرَاشِدَ اُمُوْرِنَا وَ اَعِذْنَا مِنْ شُرُوْرِ اَنْفُسِنَا

"O Allâh! Inspire us to implement what is best for us and protect us from the evils of our souls."

Always favour the opinion of the children (in issues pertaining to marriage). Allâh ﷻ forbid, if the view of the child is in conflict with the preference of the parent, you may advise the child. Counsel the child through his or her friends but don't ever compel the child to accede to your demands. Don't allow your arrogance to manipulate your judgement against their wishes.

We humbly request you to jog your memory and imagine what it was like twenty-five years ago when you as a parent were the prospective bridegroom or bride. Shouldn't your heart pound and your pulse race whenever your parents brought up the issue of your marriage? Allow your conscience to dwell on this impending issue and come up with an answer.

A girl is unable or unwilling to candidly express herself even to her own mother. She may telephone one of her friends or write a note to one of her cousins communicating her innermost feelings. She may not be able to tell you but she will certainly be able to express to her friends how her

parents are forcing her into a relationship she is not willing to accept or how preferences are not even sought out as though she doesn't matter at all.

So we request the parents to seek the opinion of their children especially the girls when dealing with their marriage proposals. Listen to what they have to say, otherwise it would give rise to untold problems in the future.

If the daughter prefers a religiously inclined husband whilst the parents, who are obsessed with material wealth, pressurise her to comply with what they prefer, you can very well imagine the outcome of this dilemma if the parents make a poor judgement. Not only will their daughter suffer but they will be weighed down by misery and grief.

In this regard, we reproduce a response by Maulânâ Muhammad Yûsuf Ludhyânwî Sâhib ﷫ *to a woman who wrote to him about the problems she is faced with, in regards to her marriage proposal.*

Choosing a Partner for Your Daughter

Question: I hail from a family who ostensibly observes the obligations of Salâh and Saum. A number of my family members have performed numerous 'Umrahs and Hajj. However, like numerous other families, my family also regard the routine performance of a few basic Faraid as Dîn and that too on a superficial level and they are proud of this. In short, there is a bit of noticeable commitment to Salâh, fasting etc. within my family and they imagine this to be Dîn in its entirety whilst there is no prominence attached to other vital aspects of Dîn like the observance of Hijâb (*Pardah*), the keeping of a beard, distinguishing between Harâm and Halâl etc. They don't assign any importance whatsoever to such issues. To top this, they are engaged in a host of pointless *Bid'ât* (innovations) on which thousands of Rupees are frittered away. They are under the delusion that such futile rituals draw them into the special mercy of

Allâh ﷻ. (May Allâh ﷻ guide them.) Apart from this, every household is perpetually spellbound by the entertainment offered by the satellite dish, video recorder and television. Their occasions of marriage culminate in every type of vice like singing, dancing etc.

Maulânâ Sâhib! Until recently, owing to my ignorance, I was also part and parcel of all these vices. (May Allâh ﷻ forgive me. Âmîn.) Of late, I was bestowed with the company of a few pious people and through the command of Allâh ﷻ. I was divinely guided to the right path. It was only then that I realized how deeply engrossed we were in sin. May Allâh ﷻ forgive us all out of His sheer mercy. Âmîn. *I have also studied some of your books, which incalculably assisted me in understanding my Dîn. In particular your book, Ikhtilâfe-Ummat Aur Sirâte-Mustaqîm, really helped me in understanding Sirâte-Mustaqîm (the straight path). I subsequently set out reforming myself little by little. Now I am at least conscious of my Pardah to some extent. I* endeavour to refrain from all vices as far as possible. I have completely abandoned television and its associated vices. May Allâh ﷻ keep me steadfast. Âmîn. I try to abstain as far as possible from all innovations and encourage my family to do the same. However, *Hidâyat* (guidance) is in the absolute control of Allâh ﷻ. He will turn their hearts whenever he wishes. Presently, my efforts have proved futile. I request you to make Du'â for my dedication as I wish to tread even further on this divine path of righteousness.

Now I will return to the actual objective of my letter. My parents want to get me married. I am also receiving a number of proposals. However, I am sorry to say that all my parents are concerned about is to get me married to a man who is financially well off. They are not bothered about my religious inclinations or about my Dînî prospects for the future. My parents attach a lot of importance to materialistic achievements but they are not in the least concerned about

how pious the prospective suitor is. Is he scrupulous with his Salâh and Saum? Are his earnings from Halâl sources? Does he have a beard or not? Etc. I, on the contrary, yearn for a man who is absolutely conscious of Dîn. A man who will able to guide me along.

I request parents of other girls as well that they, for Allâh's sake, give preference to this aspect of the prospective suitors. Whatever I have written, I have written with utmost sincerity. From the depths of my heart, I seek the divine proximity to Allâh ﷻ. Allâh ﷻ is a witness to the fact that whatever my thoughts or my intentions, I have conveyed to you in all honesty. There are a number of other things that I wish to disclose but I have to consider your precious time as well. I wonder if I was able to convey the magnitude of my feelings to you in these few words.

Nonetheless, in view of the aforementioned circumstances, I require your advice on the following:

1. If I defy my parents in this issue, will I be guilty of disobedience to parents?
2. In spite of parents being fully aware of my inclination towards Dîn, they still marry me off to someone who is not scrupulous about Dîn, on whose shoulders will the sin fall? To what degree will I be held liable?
3. (Question deleted) [3]

Answer: *Reading your letter was a source of great joy. May Allâh ﷻ grant all of us the divine ability to engage in good deeds. Âmîn. Actually, the world and its delights are in front of our eyes whilst the hereafter is concealed from us. When we leave this world for the next our eyes will open to the reality of things. But alas, at that moment in time, nobody will lend us an ear and nobody but Allâh ﷻ will entertain our complaints.*

[3] *Perhaps for reasons of confidentiality the author decided to delete the question.*

It appears in a Hadîth that Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "Intelligent is he who subjects himself to the divine commandments of Allâh ﷻ and he prepares himself for life after death whilst a stupid person is he who is subservient to his base desires but still pins his hopes upon Allâh (of divine forgiveness)." Now I will attend to your queries.

1. If your parents insist on getting you married to a man who is engrossed in the *dunyâ* and oblivious of the hereafter; he is not bothered about Salâh, Saum, Halâl, Harâm and other religious issues, you should bluntly refuse. Candidly turn down their suggestion and explain to them that you are not prepared to marry someone of this nature. This will not constitute disobedience to parents. It is not permissible to obey someone where Allâh ﷻ is disobeyed.

2. Generally girls are more forthright with their mothers. Explain to your mother that under no circumstances are you prepared to marry a man who is not religiously inclined. Allâh ﷻ has brought man and woman together so that they may assist one another in Dînî issues and so that they may save each other from the fire of hell. Choosing a man who himself is treading a pathway to hell can never be permitted.

3. There are three parts to this question:
   - It is awfully difficult for a woman to remain single all her life. So I will not advise you to remain a spinster for the rest of your life.
   - It is inappropriate to marry a married man with children as co-wives tend to be interminably engaged in hostility with one another. This will ruin your Dîn.
   - My advice to you is that you marry a pious 'Âlim who is affiliated to the Tablîgh Jamâ'at. A man who is Allâh-conscious and not of a very strict

demeanour. A man who is constantly mindful of the hereafter but he possesses a bit of the *dunyâ* as well. Inshâ Allâh, such a match will not be devoid of blessing.

A Useful Strategy

A useful strategy in dealing with marriage issues is that the mother and sisters of the boy jot down the particulars of each girl they have in mind. For instance, her age, her piety, educational qualifications, external profile, her mother's family, her father's family, his profession, the family's scrupulousness about Salâh, the morality of her brothers and sisters, the state of her other sisters' marriages - are those in-laws grateful or suffering in silence? Etc., etc.

Jot down all these relevant details on a piece of paper. The astute members of the family should then - after Salâh and Du'â – sit down and discuss this issue at hand. The father should be appointed as the Amîr or in the absence of the father, one of the other members of the family could be appointed. Thereafter, the father or the prospective groom should ask each family member for his or her opinion. For instance: "From these three potential brides, who do you think is most suitable? What is your opinion?" Thereafter, the Amîr – bearing in mind each persons input - will formulate a decision as to where the first proposal is sent. After the outcome of this first proposal, there may be a need for everyone to sit once more. The Amîr should attach more importance to the prospective groom's opinion.

The most favourable outcome of this process of *Mashwarah* is that the Sunnah of Rasûlullâh ﷺ of *Mashwarah* is revived. And wherever a Sunnah is revived, it attracts the divine mercy of Allâh ﷻ.

Another benefit of making *Mashwarah* is that it generates love amongst all the members of the family. Every member

of the family will think that they hold some value in the elder's eyes and this is why their opinion is being sought. Above all, the married elder brother will be elated to hear his opinion being sought for the marriage of his younger brother. So the most favourable outcome of this *Mashwarah* is that it brought about a lot of unity between the members of the family.

Another benefit is that the decision reached would not be regarded as the decision of one individual but rather the collective decision of the whole family. Apparently it is the decision of the Amîr but actually it is the decision of the whole household. In future, nobody will be able to say: "Father! Why didn't you consult with me?" The elder daughter-in-law won't get a chance to say: "Mother! Why didn't you ask us? If only you consulted us, you wouldn't have got entangled in this problem." Etc., etc.

Yes, the etiquette of *Mashwarah* should also be explained. Some of the etiquettes are:

1. Each person will give his opinion when it is his turn. If the need arises to speak again, he should not butt in but he should take permission and speak after the others have finished speaking.

2. Don't interrupt another person's opinion. Yes, you may express the advantages or merits of your opinion.

3. Present your opinion as an opinion and not as a decision. If an opinion was not acted upon, do not criticise nor hurl scorn upon anyone. Or, Allâh ﷻ forbid, if a tragedy occurs, avoid saying things like: "I told you so. See what happens when you disregard my opinion. Had you complied with my opinion, this wouldn't have occurred." Etc. It appears in a Hadîth that Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "The word 'if' unbolts the door

to Shaytân." So if the Amîr or one of the elders makes a decision, everyone should abide by it. If the members of the household make *Mashwarah* amongst themselves with these etiquettes in mind, Inshâ Allâh ﷻ, it would prove immensely beneficial to them. If this is not possible, the prospective groom may even write out the particulars of the girl he has in mind and consult with an experienced, elderly 'Âlim or Muftî who is well aware of his environs, its people and their nature.

4. Thirdly, be conscientious with *Istikhârah*. Take into account a few factors when making *Istikhârah*. The 'Ulamâ and seniors of Dîn have explained:

   - In order to perform *Istikhârah* Salâh, the night or the time after 'Ishâ Salâh is not stipulated in any Hadîth. Therefore, one may perform Nafl Salâh at any time of the day or night (provided it is not during the *Makrûh* time).

   - Secondly, one should perform the *Istikhârah* by himself. Many people say that they are very sinful and request others to perform *Istikhârah* on their behalf. Why don't you repent from all your sins? Beg Allâh's ﷻ forgiveness and then perform *Istikhârah* Salâh. This will please Allâh ﷻ even more.

   - *Thirdly, you won't necessarily get a response in the form of a dream. Explore the circumstances. Are the circumstances favourable to what you have made Istikhârah for or are you faced with some obstacle? If conditions are favourable, regard it as a good sign and if you are faced with some obstacle, accept it as a sign that it is better not to propose there. However, bear in mind that Mashwarah is more important that Istikhârah.*

Also consult with the seniors even after making *Istikhârah*. After this, look at the inclination of your heart and act accordingly. If you are still indecisive after the first time round, perform *Istikhârah* (Nafl Salâh) and make Du'â again and again.

Your Conduct with Your Parents

This is a topic of immense significance. In fact, just as you treat your parents, so would be the attitude of your children towards you when they grow up. Perhaps you are religiously and financially better off and you want a better upbringing for your children. However, if, Allâh ﷻ forbid, you offended your parents, make sure you contritely beg their forgiveness as soon as possible. Humble yourself before them until they are satisfied. The Hadîth makes mention of a person who was unable to recite the *Kalimah* at the time of his death. In spite of repeated attempts to do so, he felt as though a lock has been braced over his heart. When Rasûlullâh ﷺ made enquiries, he discovered that the man's mother was displeased with him. Rasûlullâh ﷺ encouraged her to forgive her son, which she subsequently did. Only then was he able to recite the *Kalimah*.

Allâh ﷻ says:

"And your Lord has decreed that you do not worship anyone but Him and that you conduct yourself favourably with your parents; if they are with you and either one or both of them has reached old age (because of which they are helpless or you find it cumbersome to serve them), then too (treat them with so much of respect) that do not even say "Uff" unto them and do not chide them and speak to them with utmost reverence. And humble yourself before them with affection and say (make Du'â for them thus): "O my Lord! Shower Your mercy upon them both just as they had reared me in childhood. (And don't confine this respect to the surface only but revere them in the heart as well and obey them because (your Lord is well-aware of what lurks within your hearts." *[Ma'âriful Qur'ân vol.5 p.463, Sûrah Banî Isrâîl]*

You can very well imagine what status obedience to parents and their gratification holds in the eyes of Allâh ﷻ. So in order to bring your children up appropriately, you should ensure that you hold your parents in high esteem especially in their old age. At such a stage in life, the spells of old age tend to make a person naturally grumpy and cantankerous.

Sometimes they make such demands that fulfilling such demands turn out to be a challenging task for the children. At this time, even a iota of cold-shouldering really breaks their hearts. For instance, your child is a bit ill and you know that with a bit of cajoling the child will go to school and nothing will happen to him. Moreover, fun and sport with his friends at school would perhaps bounce him back to good health. Now the child's grandparents are hollering: "Why do you insist on sending him to school today? Is he getting his BA today? You are dreadfully cruel to this poor child!"

Similarly, if something at home is not placed tidily, they will start yelling at the daughter-in-law: "Put this right! Put it in its place!" You return exhausted from a hard day's work at the office. You are fagged out and they start asking you about something or they are insistent on some business matter. They start harping on the same thing again and again. Whenever they meet you they bring up the problem of the leaking tap or the faulty light and pester you to attend to it. Even if they are indifferent to your hectic schedule or your busy life and during your leisure hours they assail you with questions, condemnation or repetition of the same old stories on politics, business or employment etc., don't get flustered and tell them off. As far as possible, engage them in conversation and strive to please them. When they are critical of you or they go on pestering you with the same old accounts of the past, instead of taking a defensive stance, just agree with what they say and remain silent. As far as possible, carry out their wishes but if it is not possible, don't brush them off by saying that they don't

know what they are talking about or by asking them to keep quiet. Rather tell them: "I have attempted to do as you requested but was unable to do so. I will, Inshâ Allâh, keep this in mind in the future."

Similarly, if your mother, overwhelmed with sentiments of affection, insists that you do something against your nature, bear it with patience. Whatever good she does for you, express your gratitude and commend her for it. At the outset, if you know that your mother will insist you do otherwise, don't even bring up the subject in her presence. Only mention those things in which her opinion is constructive. If however, she touches on a sensitive issue, try and deviate from the topic altogether. For instance, your mother is arguing with you. She is explaining something to you but it doesn't make sense to you or she fails to grasp what you are trying to put forward. Now, instead of engaging in a protracted row with her, change the topic altogether. Say something like: "Mother! So and so relative was quite ill. How is she now?" Or: "Mother! Has the wedding date been set for so and so's daughter?" etc. etc.

In regards to this, Muftî Taqî 'Uthmânî Sâhib writes: "A father gave his son the best of education until he graduated. One day, the old man was sitting in the courtyard of the house when a crow perched on the outer wall. The father asked his son: "Son! What is this?" He replied: "Father! This is a crow." A little while later, he asked: "Son! What is this?" He replied: "Father! This is a crow!" A few moments later, he again enquired: "Son! What is this?" The son retorted: "Father! I just mentioned to you that it's a crow!" A little while later, he once more poses: "Son! What is this?" Now the son in exasperation snaps: "Father, this is a crow." Once again the father asked him what it is. The son retorted: "How many times will you pose the same question? I've told you a thousand times that it is a crow. Don't you understand?" And the son went on berating his father for some time. A little while later, the father went indoors and

returned with an old personal diary. He opened one of the pages and asked the son to read what was written. He read: "Today I was sitting with my young son in the courtyard when a crow landed before us. He asked me twenty five times what this is and twenty five times I responded: "Son, this is a crow." I also found this very endearing."

After reading through this, the father said: "So, this is the difference between father and son. When you were young, you asked me twenty five times what this is and each time I calmly replied that it is a crow. Not only this, I even found this extremely adorable. Today I posed the same question to you five times only but you became so incensed with me?"

So don't ever get furious with whatever your parents say or do. Conduct yourself favourably with forbearance and humility. Respond to their demands with the words "yes, surely". As far as possible, try to bring comfort to them with your wealth and life. Especially if one of your parents has passed on, be more considerate towards the remaining parent because you are now the only outward support left for the remaining parent. Don't do anything that would give your mother the impression that father has passed on and she is left all alone. The sons are all under the thumbs of their wives and they couldn't care less about their mother.

Good conduct with the parents should be solely for the pleasure of Allâh Ta'âlâ. Also make Du'â for the parents. Make a habit of reciting this Du'â frequently:

رَبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيَانِيْ صَغِيْرًا

And reflect over the point in time when you were but a small, weak and innocent infant. What anguish they went through to rear you. Now when you have become a robust man and they have turned feeble, does it behove you to tell them off just by saying "Uff" at the slightest

unpleasantness? Obviously not! Hadrat 'Alî ﷺ says: "Even if there is a phrase less offensive than "Uff", it would definitely be prohibited as well."

Don't ever delude yourself into believing that you have fulfilled the rights of your parents. You have provided them with a comfortable mansion with all the amenities and servants galore. No matter what you do, even if you have to carry them on your back for Hajj a hundred times then too you would not have fulfilled their rights. Don't be comfortable with the idea that you have provided them with a house and servants and now there is no need for you to visit them. No, make a point of visiting them daily. Sit and talk with them and attend to a few of their chores with your own hands. The Hadîth offers glad tidings of a reward of Hajj just for looking at them with kindness and affection.

Some of the etiquettes in regards to conduct with parents as mentioned by the 'Ulamâ are:

The children should comply with their parent's wishes in permissible things. They should not be rude or disrespectful towards them. The children should not approach them with arrogance. They should not raise their voices above that of their parents. They should not call them by their first names. They should not do anything before them. They should not interrupt them when they are speaking. No matter how wrong they may be, do not interrupt but allow them to conclude whatever they wish to say. When they are done and it is beneficial for you to speak, go ahead otherwise acknowledge your shortcomings and seek their forgiveness. If you have to ever advise them, humble yourself and do it. Take so much of care of them that you become worthy of their Du'âs.

It appears in the Hadîth that Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "Two things are elevated to the skies without any barrier; one is the recitation of Kalimah Tayyibah and the other is the Du'â of a

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It appears in the Hadîth that Rasûlullâh said: "Two things are elevated to the skies without any barrier; one is the recitation of Kalimah Tayyibah and the other is the Du'â of a

father in favour of his children." According to another Hadîth, the pleasure of Allâh ﷻ lies in the pleasure of the father and the displeasure of Allâh ﷻ lies in the displeasure of the father. *[Tirmidhî - Abwâbul-Birri Was-Silah]*

An important point that needs to be mentioned here is that quite often what happens is that you spend time in Tablîgh or in Dînî activities or you spend some time with the pious and you are subsequently more inclined towards Dîn. This at times draws riling condemnation from the parents. For instance, the father says: "By you going out in Tablîgh, our rights are being neglected." Or you may have started keeping a beard or you enrol your children in a Dînî institute and your parents reproachfully tackle you over this. Then too, do not be rude to them. Conduct yourself favourably with them and continue making Du'â and Istighfâr for them. As mentioned in the Holy Qur'ân, after advising his father, Hadrat Ibrâhîm ﷺ said: "Salâm upon you. I will seek your forgiveness from my Lord." *[Sûrah Maryam verse 46]*

In other words Hadrat Ibrâhîm ﷺ said: "Well and good. Accept my offering of peace. Advising you now is fruitless. Now I will beg my Lord to forgive you in such a manner that He divinely guides you and absolves you of your sins." *[Ma'âriful Qur'ân vol.6 p.33]*

Lastly we reiterate that just as you treat your parents so will your children's conduct be with you. It appears in a Hadîth that Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "You maintain chastity with other people's wives, your wives will maintain their chastity. You conduct yourself favourably with your parents; your children will conduct themselves favourably with you." *[Fadâil A'mâl p.259]*

Keep this point in mind when conducting yourself with your parents. Always bear them in mind and abstain from contravening any of their rights. If you unintentionally hurt them in any way, implore them to forgive you until they pardon you and until they are content.

Avoid Blaming the Father

During some of the more challenging phases in life, some people are so overcome with emotion that they hold their parents responsible for all the ills of their lives. Thus they become disillusioned with their own parents. For instance, one of the brothers got the best of education and became a senior officer. Another brother is well settled in a foreign country whilst the third brother is battling poverty in his home country. One brother married a millionaire's daughter. He is a big businessman whilst the younger brother is managing a tiny little corner store. During the dissolution of the estate, the younger brother landed with a property that is progressively losing its value. Etc. etc.

In such circumstances, many people go about crying about their father's maltreatment or they tend to verbally abuse their parents when confronted with such circumstances. However, if you really ponder over it, why should the father be blamed if, due to the decrees of fate, one of the sons is plagued with adversities? The father did his level best to provide for all his children equally but who can question the decree of Allâh ﷻ? For example, in the dissolution of the estate, one of the sons acquired a flourishing business but after some time, he was served with an eviction notice by the landlord. He was subsequently forced to vacate the premises. On the other hand, the other brothers didn't suffer the same fate and their businesses are thriving. Or for example, one of the brothers inherited a flat equivalent in value to the house and flats inherited by the other brothers. However, as fate would have it, the value of the property plummeted after a cement factory opened up in the vicinity causing excessive air pollution or due to some other unforeseen reason.

If a person harbours such thoughts that my father was unfair to me; he gave my brothers more than me, he favoured them over me etc., this could bring about three major problems:

1. Your relentless chorus of disapproval and complaints would surely bring shame on you but together with this, your other innocent siblings are bound to get entangled in this dilemma. Their lives of tranquillity will be disturbed. Your never-ending litany of complaints will lead others to believe that your brothers and sisters did you down. This may even affect their businesses or jobs.

2. Another problem is that you offended your brothers by squabbling with them. You have shown ingratitude towards whatever little Allâh ﷻ has given you. As a result, you have displeased Allâh ﷻ as well in the process. It was solely a sentiment of jealousy that motivated him to think that my brother is a billionaire whilst I'm a mere millionaire. This is what displeases Allâh ﷻ. And whatever little comfort he had in his life also vanished.

3. The third problem is that when you reach your father's present age, just as you go on grumbling today, your children will do the same to you. Regardless of how equitable you are to all of them they will adopt the same attitude. As the proverb goes: "As you sow, so shall you reap."

So in order to safeguard yourself from these problems, Islâm teaches us that whenever we are confronted by any misfortune, we should not attribute it to our parents or siblings or anyone else. We should rather take stock of our actions and rectify our shortcomings. Go down on your knees and implore Allâh ﷻ to improve your worldly and spiritual life. Have faith that the condition Allâh ﷻ keeps you in is the best for you.

Who knows, the condition you are hankering after might just be detrimental to you. If you have a lot of money but ill health, what is the sense of all those riches if all your money

is ravaged by costly medical expenditure? What is the benefit if your wealth only enhances your problems? Yes, you should strive to eliminate the problem. For instance, if you are without a job, don't just sit on your rear and do nothing about it. Don't go around broadcasting your father's unfairness. Don't go whinging to your sisters to complain about your brothers. Look for a job instead. Even if your elder brother was unfair to you, forgive him. And keep faith that whatever is written for you will definitely come to you. If the wealth is not divinely ordained for me, what is the sense in fighting with my siblings? If my brothers and sisters are able to live comfortably due to my tolerance and gratefulness, or my parent's honour will remain intact, this will be far better than me falling into long-drawn-out quarrels with them.

If I am going to fight and argue with them, not only will their peace and our parent's honour be at stake but I risk losing even my own sense of calm. Even if I managed to get some wealth that was not destined for my use, someone else will usurp it from me. Console your heart in this manner and take heart. Men of knowledge have stated: "If a person for whom wealth was not destined places his hand into a heap of gold, the gold will turn to sand and the person for whom wealth is destined puts his hand into a mound of sand, the sand will turn to gold."

So every Muslim should be content with the condition Allâh ﷻ has chosen for him. And he should entertain the conviction that this is the best for me. If he is bitten by a mosquito, it may not be favourable but he should think that Allâh ﷻ has saved me from a snakebite and only inflicted me with a mere mosquito bite. In this manner, he will get the Taufiq (divine ability) to express gratitude unto Allâh ﷻ.

Serve Your Father

If you want your children to honour you, you want them to look up to you with a gaze of admiration, you want them to obey you, you want Allâh ﷻ to instil your reverence into their hearts and apart from the spiritual advantages, you wish to acquire innumerable worldly benefits, then conduct yourself favourably with your father. As the famous proverb reads: "As you sow, so shall you reap". Planting wheat and hoping for barley or sowing millet and hoping to cultivate rice is a sure symbol of stupidity. As we treat our parents today, so will our children treat us tomorrow. So treat your parents with utmost respect and courtesy. Don't even tell them words like "Uff" or "Oh!" Give them free reign over your wealth. Don't even express any form of disapproval because they have an absolute right over your wealth. You and your wealth belong to your father.

An Incident

'Allâmah Qurtubî رحمه الله narrates with an uninterrupted chain of narrators that Hadrat Jâbir ﷺ narrates: "A person came to Rasûlullâh ﷺ complaining that his father seized all his wealth." Rasûlullâh ﷺ asked him to call his father. In the interim, Hadrat Jibraîl عليه السلام turned up and said: "When the father shows up, ask him to verbalize the words formed by his heart; the words which even his ears haven't heard." When the man returned with his father, Rasûlullâh ﷺ asked him: "What's the problem? Your son had lodged a complaint against you. Do you want to usurp all his wealth?" The father submitted: *"Ask him, apart from spending on his aunties and myself, where else do I spend the money?"* Rasûlullâh ﷺ *said: "All right!" (In other words, I now understand the reality of what's happening. There is no need to make further investigations.) Thereafter Rasûlullâh ﷺ asked him about the words that his ears haven't heard until now. The man replied: "O Rasûl of Allâh! Allâh ﷻ increases our faith in you at every turn." (In other words,*

the fact that you have already been informed of the words which nobody else has heard of indicates that this is your miracle.)

The man then said: "It is true that I have composed a few poems in my heart. I haven't as yet expressed them verbally." Rasûlullâh ﷺ then requested him to go ahead and verbalise what he composed.

He said:

غدوتُك مولوداً و منتُك يافعًا　　　تعلّ بما اجنى عليك وتنهل

اذا ليلة ضافتك بالسقم لم ابت　　　لسقمك الاّ ساهرًا اتململ

كانّى انا المطروق دونك بالذى　　　طُرقتُ به دونى فعينى تهمل

تخاف الردى نفسى عليك وانّها　　　لتعلم انّ الموت وقت مؤجل

فلمّا بلغتَ السِنَّ والغاية التى　　　اليها مدى ما كنتُ فيك اُؤمّل

جعلتَ جزائي غلظة وفظاظة　　　كانّك انت المنعم المتفضل

فليتك اذ لم ترعَ حقّ اُبوّتى　　　فعلت كما الجار المصاقب يفعل

فاَوْليتَنى حقّ الجوار ولم تكن　　　عليَّ بمال دون مالك تبخل

"I nourished you in infancy and bore all your responsibilities as you grew up, all your requirements of food and drink were borne solely by my income. When you fell ill at night I would not sleep and pass the entire night in restlessness and discomfort. It was as though the illness afflicted me instead of you and as a result I would stay up all night long. Deep down I would dread your death whereas I was well aware that death strikes at its appointed hour. Now when you reached the age that I longed for, You repay me with abrasive language and abusive words as though you are doing a favour unto me. Alas! If you are unable to fulfil my rights of fatherhood, at least conduct yourself like a gracious neighbour towards me. If you could at least fulfil your neighbourly rights and if only you didn't act miserly with me with my own money."

After listening to this old man reciting these poems, Rasûlullâh ﷺ held onto the son's collar and said: "Go! You as well as your wealth belong to your father." *[Qurtubî vol.10 p.246, Ma'âriful Qur'ân vol.5 p.468]*

Not only is Allâh ﷻ pleased and Jannah guaranteed with the service and obedience to the parents but serving and obeying them also entails numerous worldly benefits like abundance in sustenance, longevity etc.

Hadrat Anas bin Mâlik رضي الله عنه narrates that Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "He who yearns for a long life and abundance in his sustenance should be good to his parents and maintain favourable ties with his relatives." *[Musnad Ahmad as quoted in Targhîb wat-Tarhîb p.290]*

It appears in another Hadîth narrated by Hadrat Mu'âz bin Anas رضي الله عنه that Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "He who treats his parents well, for him is a glad-tiding that Allâh ﷻ will grant him a long life."

Beloved brother! This world is a 'place of action' and an ideal opportunity to make the life of the hereafter a successful one. Do whatever good you can in this transitory abode. A true believer is perpetually eager to prepare for the eternal life of the hereafter and the more time he gets for this preparation the better. In this context, a longer life for a believer is a magnificent blessing indeed. And this is not in anybody else's control, but within his own control. Serve your parents graciously and earn this great blessing. At the same time, Allâh ﷻ will also fulfil your worldly objectives and ward off all forms of adversity.

An incident which Rasûlullâh ﷺ related to the Sahâbah رضي الله عنهم is mentioned in Sahîh Bukhârî; three people were once travelling when a driving downpour forced them to seek refuge in a cave. As they settled in, a gigantic boulder rolled over the mouth of the cave sealing it off completely. All three were left in a state of utter bewilderment. Neither

were they able to shift the boulder nor was anyone around to assist them. So they all admitted defeat and sat down in despair awaiting certain death whenever it comes. However, after some time, they said to one another: "It is immoral of us to despair of Allâh's ﷻ mercy. Come; let each one of us recall the best action of his life as a medium to plead for Allâh's ﷻ assistance. We earnestly hope that Allâh ﷻ will safely deliver us from this calamity." One of them pleaded: O Allâh! My parents were elderly and I had a number of young children. I used to graze goats. Every evening, on my return home, I would milk them and feed my parents first. Only then should I feed my children. One day, I returned home incredibly late as I went far off to graze them. My parents were sound asleep by the time I got home. As was my daily routine, I milked the goats, filled a cup and went and stood at their head side. I remained standing waiting for them to get up and drink the milk. It was already quite late at night. My children were moaning with hunger but I could not bear the children drinking before my parents. How can my parents sleep hungry whilst my children go to bed well satiated? I remained standing like this all night whilst my parents were blissfully asleep. O Allâh! If my conduct with my parents was solely for Your pleasure remove this boulder from the mouth of this cave through Your infinite mercy." As he said this, the boulder dislodged itself slightly. At least the sky was now clearly visible. The other two people also recalled their good actions and implored Allâh's ﷻ assistance. Allâh ﷻ dislodged the rock completely from the mouth of the cave. *[Sahîh Bukhârî vol.1 p.493, Mishkât p.225 - Refer to Riyâdus Sâlihîn for further details]*

Ponder over this incident; owing to his dedicated service to his parents, Allâh ﷻ rescued them from certain death. So make sure you hold your parents in the highest regard. Hadrat Abû Hurairah رضي الله عنه once saw two people. He asked the younger of the two, "How is this other man related to you?" He replied: "This is my father." Hadrat Abû Hurairah رضي الله عنه advised: "Take note, don't ever call your father by his first

name. When walking together, don't walk in front of him but a little behind him. And when taking a seat, don't sit down before him." *[Al-Adabul Mufrad]*

Serve your parents with unreserved dedication solely for the pleasure of Allâh ﷻ. Always be mindful of their honour and respect. Inshâ Allâh, you will become an ideal father and your children will also turn out to be a source of coolness to your eyes.

Du'âs of the Children for the Parents

The Holy Qur'ân and Ahâdîth teach us a number of Du'âs that were made by the Ambiyâ ﷺ in favour of their parents or their fathers. We may also make the same Du'âs in an attempt to draw the mercy of Allâh ﷻ. You may also teach these Du'âs to your innocent children and make an attempt to teach them these Du'âs by heart. Some of these Du'âs are:

رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْلِيْ وَ لِوَالِدَيَّ وَ لِلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ يَوْمَ يَقُوْمُ الْحِسَابُ

"O our Lord! Forgive me and my parents and the believers on the day the reckoning will be established." *[Sûrah Ibrâhîm verse 40]*

This blessed supplication is a Du'â for the pardon of ones own sins and the sins of the parents. O Allâh! Forgive us all. Advise your children and your grandchildren to recite this Du'â thrice after every Salâh.

رَبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيٰنِيْ صَغِيْرًا

"O My Lord! Shower your mercy on both of them (parents) as they reared me when I was young." *[Sûrah Isrâ verse 24]*

This is a Du'â imploring Allâh ﷻ to shower His infinite mercy upon the parents. The children should plead with Allâh ﷻ:

Allâh! Just as my parents were affectionately merciful wards me in childhood, in the same manner I request you shower Your compassion upon them." In Sûrah Banî rail, Allâh ﷻ has commanded the children to recite this Du'â in favour of their parents.

adrat Muftî Muhammad Shafî Sâhib *rahmatullâhi 'alaih* ites in his commentary of the Holy Qur'ân: "The injunction ealing with obedience and service to parents is not onfined to any specific time or age. Favourable conduct ith the parents is vital at all times irrespective of their age. hen the execution of any obligation is faced with inhibiting rcumstances, in such circumstances the Holy Qur'ân – in order to make its implementation simpler – employs multitudinous approaches to make man more receptive of s obligations whilst also re-emphasising his obligations in these circumstances. When the parents reach old age and they are in need of their children's services and when their very existence is centred upon the benevolence of their children, if at this moment in time the parents feel a bit unwanted or unwelcome by their children, the parents are bound to be highly traumatised.

On the other hand, during the latter part of their old age when their mind and intellectual capabilities are all on the brink of collapse, they tend to make such irrational demands and requests that it becomes rather awkward for the children to carry them out. In such trying circumstances, the Holy Qur'ân, whilst directing us to comfort and hearten the parents, also draws our attention to our own childhood, when we were also just as helpless as they are dependent upon us today. So just as they sacrificed their comfort and desires for us and they patiently bore all your foibles with love, now when they are left helpless, intellect and graciousness demands that you duly compensate them for their past favours. The verse "as they had reared me when I was young" makes a subtle reference to this fact. The

foregoing verses underscore a few essential directives in regards to parents of old age;

Firstly, the Qur'ân decrees that you should never utter "Uff" (a word of displeasure) to them. The word 'Uff' refers to any expression of annoyance or irritation. In fact, to emit a prolonged sigh in annoyance also falls under the category of 'Uff'.

According to another Hadîth narrated on the authority of Hadrat 'Alî ؓ, Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "If there is an expression even less annoying than the utterance of 'Uff', it would have also been mentioned." (In short, anything that bothers the parents in the least is prohibited.)

The second commandment is "And do not rebuke them." The reason behind this is obvious; it causes anguish to them.

The third commandment is: "And converse with them gracefully." The first two commandments were essentially prohibitions where we have been forbidden to cause any form of heartache to the parents. In this third commandment, employing a more positive approach. Allâh ﷻ teaches us the etiquette of conversing with our parents; converse with them in a gentle and affectionate manner. Whilst elaborating on the correct manner of speaking to the parents, Hadrat Sa'îd bin Musayyab *rahmatullâhi 'alaih* says: "Just as a meek slave speaks to his ruthless master."

The fourth commandment is, "And lower for both of them the wing of submissiveness of mercy." In other words, humble yourself before your parents as a submissive slave before his master. The word used in the verse is "Janâh" which means wing. Literally, the verse reads: "Lower your wings of submissiveness and obedience before your parents. At the end of the verse is the word "Rahmah" – mercy – which signals that your conduct with your parents should

not be prompted by mere show but your conduct with them should be encouraged by compassion and respect. Another point that may be drawn from this verse is that your submissive attitude towards your parents is actually a forerunner to your respect for them. This is not actually submissiveness in its true sense but an approach fostered by affection and love.

The fifth commandment is: "And say 'O my Lord! Shower Your mercy upon both of them....." This illustrates that providing absolute comfort to the parents is not possible for an average human being. So, together with the concern of providing comfort to the parents however possible, a person should also make Du'â: "O Allâh! With Your infinite mercy, relieve them of their difficulties and do away with their concerns." This final commandment of making Du'â for them is so comprehensive that it applies even after the death of the parents. Making Du'â for them is a form of service he can render to them even after they leave this world.

It would be your great fortune if you and your wife could be a source of courage and confidence for them. How gracious it would be if you could put all their fears at rest and provide them with peace of mind. Make constant Du'â for them and just as you rear your own children cheerfully tolerating all their problems, in the same way stomach whatever bitterness your parents dole out to you. If you can bear this patiently, you would be fortunate indeed.

'Allâmah 'Ainî *rahmatullâhi 'alaih* mentions a Hadîth in the commentary of Bukhârî; the person who recites the following Du'â and implores Allâh ﷻ to convey the reward to his parents will be regarded as one who has fulfilled the rights of his parents.

اَلْحَمْدُ لله رَبِّ الْعَالَـمِيْنَ رَبِّ السَّمـاَوَاتِ وَ رَبِّ الْاَرْضِ رَبِّ الْعَالَـمِيْنَ ۞ وَلَهُ الْكِبْرِيَاءُ فِي السَّمـاَوَاتِ وَ الْاَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الْـحَكِيْمُ ۞ لِله الْـحَمْدُ رَبِّ السَّمـاَوَاتِ وَ رَبِّ الْاَرْضِ رَبِّ الْعَالَـمِيْنَ ۞ وَلَهُ الْعَظْمَةُ فِيْ السَّمـاَوَاتِ وَ الْاَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الْـحَكِيْمُ ۞ وَهُوَ الْـمَلِكُ رَبُّ السَّمـاَوَاتِ وَ رَبُّ الْاَرْضِ وَرَبُّ الْعَالَـمِيْنَ ۞ وَلَهُ النُّوْرُ فِيْ السَّمـاَوَاتِ وَ الْاَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الْـحَكِيْمُ

"All praise is due to Allâh ﷻ the Sustainer of the worlds, the Lord of the skies, the Lord of the earth and the Lord of the worlds. For Him alone is the majesty in the heavens and earth and He is most prevailing and most wise. For Allâh alone is praise, the Lord of the heavens and the Lord of the earth and the Lord of the worlds. And to Him alone belongs the grandeur in the skies and the earth and He is most prevailing and most wise. He is the sovereign, the Lord of the heavens and the Lord of the earth and the Lord of the worlds. And to Him alone belongs the *Nûr* (radiance) in the skies and the earth and He is the most prevailing and most wise.

At the end of Irshâdus Sârî the following Du'â is quoted:

اَللّٰهُمَّ افْعَلْ بِيْ وَ بِـهِمـاَ عَاجِلاً وَ آجِلاً فِي الدِّيْنِ وَالدُّنْيَا وَ الْآخِرَةِ مَا اَنْتَ لَهُ اَهْلٌ وَ لَا تَفْعَلْ بِيْ وَ بِـهِمـاَ عَاجِلاً وَ آجِلاً فِيْ الدِّيْنِ وَالدُّنْيَا وَ الْآخِرَةِ مَا نَحْنُ لَهُ اَهْلٌ يَا مَوْلَانَا

"O Allâh! Treat my parents and I, presently or in the future, in the Dîn, dunyâ and the hereafter as befits Your status. And do not treat my parents, or me presently or in the future, in our Dîn, dunyâ or hereafter as befits our status, O Our Master!" *[Irshâdus Sârî Kitâbul-Ad'iyah Al-Hajj wal 'Umrah p.8-Beirut]*

Pious Children – A Source of Perpetual Reward

If you predecease your children, they will be a source of perpetual reward for you. Your book of deeds will continue recording good deeds in your favour even after you bid farewell to this world. The moment death strikes, the opportunity of performing good deeds terminate. However, if a person leaves behind pious children, it is an action that continues recording good deeds in his book of deeds. Hadrat Abû Hurairah ﷺ reports that Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "When a person dies, his opportunity of further action also ceases except in three cases; (he will be rewarded even after his death) in the case of perpetual charity, when he leaves behind knowledge from which people benefit or when he leaves behind pious children who make Du'â for him after his death." *[Mishkât vol.1 p.32]*

Hadrat Abû Hurairah ﷺ says: "When the deceased witnesses his rank being elevated he asks in astonishment: "How did this happen?" From Allâh's ﷻ side he is informed: "Your children are engaged in making Du'â of forgiveness for you (and Allâh ﷻ has accepted their Du'âs." *[Ibn Mâjah p.268]*

Hadrat Ibn Sîrîn *rahmatullâhi 'alaih* says: "One night we were seated in the company of Hadrat Abû Hurairah ﷺ when he raised his hands in Du'â. With unreserved humility he supplicated: "O my Lord! Pardon Abû Hurairah and pardon the mother of Abû Hurairah. O my Lord! And pardon all those who make Du'â of forgiveness for Abû Hurairah and his mother." Just then we all got down to make Du'â of forgiveness for Abû Hurairah and his mother so that we could also be included in his Du'â."

So don't leave any stone unturned in the religious upbringing of your children be they sons or daughters. Make an all-out effort to turn them into religious souls and make them propagators of Dîn in the entire world. Ensure that they are scrupulous about their Salâh, Zikr and Tilâwah

even before they reach puberty. Make the daughters devotedly conscious of Hijâb *(Pardah)* and women who are bashfully modest. Ensure that they refrain from backbiting, lies, verbal abuse and other such evils of the tongue. Make an effort to instil the honour and admiration of the Muslims into their hearts and strive to infuse within them the spirit of disseminating the word of Allâh ﷻ to all the peoples of the world. Turn them into children who strive for what is right and above all make them children who constantly implore Allâh ﷻ in Du'â.

If, Allâh ﷻ forbid, the father frittered away his youth in immorality, he should make *Taubah* and repent for all his past sins and attempt to make his children into pious 'Ulamâ, Huffâz and propagators of Dîn. He should also declare in his will that so and so son or grandson be encouraged to become an 'Âlim or Hâfiz etc. In this regard we recall an incident; there was a young man who frittered his youth away in sinful transgression. Once he married and got a son, Allâh ﷻ steered him to a path of spiritual guidance. He was immensely remorseful about his errant past. Nonetheless, he was not a man without aspiration. He genuinely wanted his son to become a Hâfiz of the Holy Qur'ân but death struck him before he could realize his expectations. As he was breathing his last, he requested his wife to make the child a Hâfiz when he grows up. The poor wife discharged this parting request by leaving the child at the Madrasah when he came of age. The Qârî Sâhib at the Madrasah made the child perform Wudû, seated him right next to him and asked him to recite with him: "Bismillâhir-Rahmânir-Rahîm". The instant the child mimicked the Qârî Sâhib in the recitation of *Tasmiyah*, the ardour of Allâh's ﷻ divine mercy came to the fore. The father who was suffering the pangs of the punishment of the grave was rapidly released from any further punishment. When asked the reason for his sudden redemption, he was informed: "When

your child referred to Allâh ﷻ as 'Rahmân' and 'Rahîm', Allâh ﷻ enveloped you with His infinite mercy."

There are a number of other such incidents. In short, discipline and educate your children within an Islâmic mould and a Dînî spirit.

The Obligations of the Children and Parents

Islâm has assigned each individual his own set of responsibilities. The father, the mother and the children, each one of them are liable for their distinctive obligations. Execution of our individual duties has been repeatedly emphasised by our Dîn since in it lays our eternal success. For instance, it is the father's duty to rear his children in a religious mould. He should leave no stone unturned in rearing his children correctly. He should treat them with plenty of love and affection. He should opt for a more compassionate approach when dealing with his children. He should decidedly refrain from hard-handedness and abusive language. If, Allâh ﷻ forbid, due to illness or your disposition etc. you are predisposed to moods of peevishness and temperamental mood swings, make an attempt to eliminate this dreadful malady. Think that this affliction is from Allâh ﷻ, so why should your family members bear the burden of it. Why should you yell at them or speak to them abrasively as this would neither cure the illness nor solve the problem. Yes, all you would be doing is wrecking the home environment and Allâh ﷻ forbid, making their life a misery.

Here we reproduce a question and answer from the book, 'Âp ke Masâil Aur un Kâ Hal' by a leading scholar, Maulânâ Muhammad Yûsuf Ludhyânwî Sâhib رحمه الله. This will clearly affirm the extent to which the family is affected by ill temper or abusiveness and how the children slip out of parental control. May Allâh ﷻ protect us all. Âmîn.

Question: My wife rebelliously opposes whatever I ask her to do. She takes relish in abstaining from fulfilling her conjugal rights. Yesterday, I summoned my elder daughter to come and have a word with her mother. She subsequently came back and said that chances of healing the rift between us are mighty slim and in the interests of all parties concerned it would be best if both of you separate amicably. *One of my malevolent sons put a spanner in the works and threatened to take his mother away with him. In spite of my repeated demands that she don't go with him, she took off with him and I have no idea where she is. Now I wish to disown my son. What should I do about my wife? Your counsel is desperately required. What is most startling is that the son is instrumental in the break up of his parents' marriage and to top it all, all the children have sided with their mother against me.*

Answer: Assalâmu 'alaykum wa Rahmatullâhî wa Barakâtuhu

I have examined your heartrending letter and I was exceptionally moved by your miserable condition. May Allâh ﷻ ease your difficulties. I normally abstain from advising others in their personal affairs. This is why I will just stick to a few basic principles:

1. As the children grow older it is crucial to respect their emotions and consider their feelings. The relentless fighting and arguing of the parents is bound to diminish the respect of the parents from the hearts of the children. To engage in any form of altercation with the wife in front of the children is a major fundamental flaw.

2. Indisputably the husband enjoys a host of rights over his wife and her attention is also drawn to the importance of fulfilling her husband's rights. However, the husband should also be considerate of

her nature and determine to what extent she is able to withstand the burden of his rights. This is one of the reasons the Sharî'ah has permitted men to take up to four wives, as this will ensure that one woman is not saddled with more than she can possibly tolerate. In the case of multiple wives, the Sharî'ah has *very sternly obliged the husband to treat them all impartially and to refrain from acting the least bit impartial in favour of any one of his wives.*

3. *On the day of judgement, the wife will not be the only one to account for all her transgressions but the husband will also be summoned to account for his bad manners, rudeness and cruelty. He will then be taken to task for all his transgressions.*

4. *On the basis of what you describe, it appears that the most influential factor leading up to this ordeal is* your rudeness (for which you may well be excused due to your illness or temperament). The aftermath of your behaviour is quite evident from the impact it had on your wife and children. If you alter your approach and rectify your attitude towards them, there will be a higher chance of them changing their attitude towards you.

5. If you are unable to mould your temperament to fit the circumstances, as a final resort you may separate from your wife but the repercussion of this would be that your children would also be cut-off from you. Your young children will consider you a tyrant and their mother as a victim of your brutality and they will subsequently side with her. As a form of retaliation, they will sever all relationship with you. Such a stance (separating from her) will be disastrous in this world as well as the next for all parties concerned.

6. Exercising patience on the wife's annoyance is a *Jihâd* on its own. Allâh ﷻ will amply reward you for your tolerant stance. If you sincerely aspire this lofty reward, remember that its path meanders through the barbed valleys of forbearance and perseverance. In this case, you will be compelled to agree to some form of conciliatory measures and compromise with your wife and children. Not by considering yourself as a victim of their meanness but by considering your own self culpable for their transgressions. *I am the guilty party but I lay the blame upon the others.*

7. If you honestly wish to reconcile you will have to clobber your own desires. To this end, you will have to impose certain conditions upon yourself; firstly, nothing but good should leave your tongue. Don't ever mention anything unbecoming. Secondly, don't even consider your rights over others and don't even allow any form of grievance to develop in your heart. In fact, if someone conducts himself favourably towards you consider it a divine windfall and if you are ill-treated by others or you fall prey to their abuse, consider yourself fortunate. You deserved something worse but praise be to Allâh ﷻ, He did not fully take you to task and he did not punish you for all your transgressions. Exercise patience over such conditions. Thirdly, every angle of your bearing with your wife and children should be one of affection and warmth. You should conduct yourself as a loving husband and an affectionate father.

8. It is Harâm (prohibited) to disinherit any of the heirs. Even if you spitefully cut any one of them from your will, Islâmically he still remains a legitimate heir. This is why I will advise you not to take such a drastic step. You have already made this world a living hell; so for Allâh's sake don't turn your hereafter into hell.

Make an effort to reconcile with the son you threatened to disinherit.

9. One of our seniors has mentioned that when a person disobeys Allâh ﷻ and violates His commandments, the first punishment meted out to him is in the form of the resistance he faces from his wife and children. *So if you want your family members to amend their attitude towards you, why don't you rectify your attitude towards your Maker? Don't you need to change your attitude towards Allâh ﷻ? Rectify your bearing with Allâh ﷻ and He will, Inshâ Allâh, remedy your condition with your family.* Hadrat 'Alî ؓ says: *There are five symbols of a person's good fortune:*

- His wife complies with him
- His children are pious and obedient
- His friends are Allâh-conscious
- His neighbour is pious
- His sustenance is accessible within his hometown

10. Perhaps your wife and son would peruse my letter as well. I appeal to both of them to refrain from making matters worse than they are. They should make every effort to resolve the issue. A saint says: "A pious woman has six distinguishing features: Firstly, she is meticulous with her five daily Salâh. Secondly, she is subservient to her husband. Thirdly, she is satisfied with the destiny ordained for her by her Allâh ﷻ. Fourthly, she protects her tongue from backbiting, verbal abuse and slander. Fifthly, she is indifferent to the glamour and wealth of this world. And sixthly, she exercises patience in the face of adversity."

Similarly, children have a moral obligation to respect their parents. Hadrat Abû Umâmah ؓ says that a person asked Rasûlullâh ﷺ: "What rights do my parents enjoy

over me?" Rasûlullâh ﷺ replied: "They are either your paradise or your hell." *[Mishkât p.421]*

Hadrat Abû Dardâ ؓ says: "I heard Rasûlullâh ﷺ saying: "The father is the best door to Jannah. So, it is up to you either to protect the door or to destroy it." *[Mishkât p.419]*

Hadrat 'Abdullâh bin 'Umar ؓ says that Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "Allâh's ﷻ pleasure lies in the pleasure of the father and His displeasure lies in the displeasure of the father." *[Mishkât p.49]*

Hadrat Ibn 'Abbâs ؓ says that Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "He who is obedient to both his parents will have two doors of Jannah opened for him and if he has only one surviving parent, one door is open for him. And he who is disobedient to his parents will have two doors of hell open for him and in the case of one parent then one door will be open for him." Someone enquired: "Even if the parents are cruel to him." "Yes," Rasûlullâh ﷺ replied: "Even if the parents are cruel to him." *[Mishkât p.421]*

The actions of man perpetuated by his body are based upon his heart. This is corroborated by a Hadîth in which Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "Man's body contains a piece of flesh. If this flesh is in order, the entire body is in order and if this flesh is corrupt, the entire body is corrupt. And this flesh is the heart." So strive to (spiritually) improve the condition of your heart.

Similarly, it appears in another Hadîth that when a person commits a sin, a black spot forms on his heart. If he repents, the black spot is eliminated. However, if he fails to repent and continues sinning, his heart, due to the excessive number of black spots, turns completely black to such an extent that a time comes when the heart holds no desire whatsoever to perform any article of righteousness."

From this we establish that there are two types of hearts; one spiritually radiant and the other spiritually dark. Now it is up to us to decide the nature of our hearts. Hereunder we mention a few techniques to introduce this spiritual brilliance within the heart. Practical implementation of these techniques, will Inshâ Allâh, turn the heart into a vessel of spiritual radiance. This in turn will encourage good deeds. These strategies are extracted from the Holy Qur'ân, Ahâdîth and the sayings of the righteous 'Ulamâ. So you should indisputably put them into practice:

1. Make *Taubah* and *Istighfâr* your standard routine. Recite the following *Istighfâr* thrice after Fajr and 'Asr Salâh:

   اَسْتَغْفِرُ اللهَ الْعَظِيْمَ الَّذِىْ لاَ اِلٰهَ اِلاَّ هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّوْمُ وَاَتُوْبُ اِلَيْهِ

2. Recite Kalimah Tayyibah and Kalimah Shahâdah as frequently and abundantly as you possibly can. Fix a time daily in which you recite Kalimah Tayyibah at least a hundred times.

3. Recite the Holy Qur'ân daily. At least a Juz or half a Juz per day. Aim to recite with the requisite *Âdâb* (etiquette). These *Âdâb* are mentioned in Fadâil Qur'ân compiled by Shaikhul-Hadîth Maulânâ Zakariyyâ Sâhib *rahmatullâhi 'alaih*.

4. Remember death as frequently as you can. If possible, recite the following Du'â at least twenty five times a day:

   اَللّٰهُمَّ بَارِكْ لِىْ فِى الْمَوْتِ وَفِىْ مَا بَعْدَ الْمَوْتِ

5. Draw out a bit of free time in an attempt to spend this time with the Tablîgh Jamâ'at. Similarly, make a point of sitting for the T'alîmî sessions of Fadâil A'mâl at your local Musjid and also the lectures of Qur'ân and Hadîth.
6. Do your utmost to associate with the religious and Dînî-conscious people. Also attend the Majâlis (assemblages) of the pious 'Ulamâ and devout saints.

7. Develop an enthusiastic zeal to read up reliable Islâmic literature. For instance, Fadâil A'amâl, Fadâil Sadaqât by Maulânâ Muhammad Zakariyyâ Sâhib *rahmatullâhi 'alaih* , Hayâtus-Sahâbah by Maulânâ Muhammad Yûsuf Kândehlawî Sahib *rahmatullâhi 'alaih*, Islâhî Khutubât by Justice Muftî Muhammad Taqî 'Uthmânî Sâhib, Rûh ki Bîmâriyân' Aur un kâ 'Ilâj" – 'Spiritual Maladies and their Remedy" – by Hakîm Muhammad Akhtar Sâhib, Uswae Rasûl-e-Akram ﷺ by Doctor 'Abdul Hay Sâhib *rahmatullâhi 'alaih* and Tarîqa-e-Wasiyyat compiled by the Ustâds of Madrasah Baitul 'Ilm.

8. *Include the recitation of the following Wazîfah Kitâbs in your daily rituals:*
   - *Mustanad Majmû'ah Wazâif by the Ustâds of Madrasah Baitul 'Ilm.*
   - *Al-Hizbul A'zam translated by Maulânâ Badre 'Âlam Mîrathî rahmatullâhi 'alaih.*
   - *Zarî'ah-e-Wusûl Ilâ Jânâb-e-Rasûl ﷺ translated by Maulânâ Yûsuf Ludhyânwî Sâhib* رحمه الله.
   - Isthighfâr ki Sattar Du'âe (Seventy Du'âs of repentance) compiled by the Ustâds of Madrasah Baitul'Ilm.

Valuable Advice to Muslim Parents

Every Muslim father is advised to meticulously record all his assets in a manner that does not give cause to his heirs to clash with one another in contesting his estate after his death. To this end, we suggest a few proposals designed to prevent such a state of affairs. We urge you to try and implement them. Since such proposals are not very popular in our society, their implementation seems difficult if not impossible. No significance whatsoever is attached to them. If only a measure of vigilance is trained onto these proposals it would neither be difficult nor seemingly impossible and they would guarantee some degree of security against warring heirs.

1. It is best to avoid getting two sons married at the same time. In other words, avoid bringing in two daughters-in-law into the home at the same time. Also, avoid keeping them under the same roof as this may possibly lead to heated rivalry and mutual contempt. Their mother-in-law will shower one of them with heaps of praise whilst hurling mounds of criticism against the other. This creates hatred coupled with despair between the brothers. Subsequently, friction develops between the spouses and the tranquillity of the house is doomed. So the presence of two sisters-in-law under a common roof - especially if they share the same kitchen – is the root of all domestic feuds. If you are forced under constrained circumstances to maintain both daughters-in-law under the same roof at least provide each one of them a separate kitchen (or cooking area) as the stove is from where the flames of conflict erupt. The kitchen is where it all flares up.

For further reference, every father is requested to study Tohfa-e-Zawjain (Gift for the Husband and Wife)[4], Islâmî Shâdî (Islâmic Weddings) from the Malfûzât of Hadrat Thânwî *rahmatullâhi 'alaih* and Tohfa-e-Dulhâ (Gift for the Husband) etc.

2. If you are financially able, provide each son and daughter with his or her own plot, property or house independently. Also transfer it onto their names and grant them physical ownership as well. Also keep a safe written record of these transfers. If this is not possible, appraise the market value of your home and the amount each son is entitled to, give the same amount or at least half of the amount to the daughters. Alternatively, you may purchase a plot, transfer it to her name and grant her physical ownership of the same. As for the personal home, it would be better if you transfer it onto the names' of the sons and their mother. Also give them physical ownership of the house. This will ensure that after the death of the father the sons won't be additionally burdened with the task of trying to sell the house in order to realise the shares of the daughters. And since the daughters, Alhamdulillâh, have already left home for their husbands' homes, in all probability they won't need the house whilst the sons can't do without a house. Now the house will belong to the sons (and their mother) only without intrusion by any of the other heirs.

A third option is that the amount you forward to the son or daughter to assist them in building or purchasing a house, forward it as a soft loan and also keep a written record of the same. After the death of the father, this debt should be called up for repayment to the estate. Alternatively, this amount may be deducted from his or her share of the estate.

[4] *Available in English from Madrasah Arabia Islamia – Azaadville, S.Africa*

This will ensure that the other heirs who were not assisted to with a soft loan don't go about grumbling that the elder sibling acquired his own house with the assistance of the father and now he wants to unlawfully claim an additional share from the father's house.

3. Our third advice to you would be that you don't ever distribute all your assets in your lifetime in a manner that leaves you downright destitute. There have been a few cases where the father distributed all his assets in his lifetime and the children, instigated by their spouses, are prepared to throw the poor father out of his 'own' house or the children tend to become indifferent to their parents needs.

4. If you have a business, try to set up a separate business for each son. If two brothers don't get along from the beginning, make sure they are not in the same business. It is far better if each one has his own business and both of them enjoy a warm relationship instead of both of them sharing a huge business in an atmosphere of consistent disputes and invariable clashes. Yes, if the younger brother abides by the instructions of the elder brother whilst the elder brother always does everything with the approval of the younger brother, then you may keep them in the same business. However, ensure that their shares of the business and terms of ownership are clearly defined so that they are not faced with any problem if they ever have to split up. All said and done, in these times, due to a divergence of temperaments and due to a lack of a tolerant spirit, an ideal situation would be where each brother has his own business. Also, in these times, neither the youngsters respect their elders nor do the elders consult the youngsters in their mutual affairs. As a result, a never-ending train of disputes besieges

people especially if the brothers' wives are living together and sharing the same kitchen. So sisters-in-law who live under a common roof are often responsible for the disputes that split the brothers apart. If nothing else, Shaytân makes the children fight with one another thus drawing the sisters-in-law into conflict and this subsequently viciously mars the relationship the brothers (their husbands) enjoy. Occasionally the domestic servants are responsible for this malicious split. Nowadays we are plagued by another menace; if one of the brother's children is more attractive or more delightful in his foibles and the grandparents, uncles or aunts are more disposed to this 'lovable' child, it develops into a nasty cause for bitter hostilities. The daughters-in-law lie in wait to see who gets the most attention; their own child or the other daughter-in-law's child? Let us observe whom *Dâdî* (grandmother) gives the sweets to first? Who does she attend to first? Which child draws most of her attention? She then gives her husband a solid tongue-lashing: "Look at your mother! She doesn't even bother about our children! She indulges the other children more than our children!" Now the husband, at work or at the office is left bewildered thinking about what his wife heaped into his eardrums just before going to bed the previous night or at breakfast. Now at the most unseemly provocation or the most inconsequential inappropriate behaviour of the other brother, he thinks that he is getting a raw deal. He is now deluded into believing that his brother is admired and appreciated by all whilst he and his children are forever marginalized. *So the best solution to avoid any such form of anguish is that as far as possible, separate the sons' living quarters especially their kitchens. If possible, keep them in different areas with each son independently owning his own business.*

5. Similarly, if you and your brothers are joint partners in a business, persuade them to stipulate each and every partner's predetermined share of the business. This responsibility fell onto your shoulders the moment you became a husband. Until now, if you have still been detached about sorting yourselves out, at least now when you have become a father do something about it. Become conscious of your responsibility by determining what exactly is your share of the business so that your wife and children are not left penniless after your death and they will be able to acquire your share as their rightful inheritance without having to be indebted to other members of the family. Quite often (especially in our culture) it's a family-run business and each partner on a monthly basis just takes what he wants from the till. When the brothers are notified about such Shar'î guidelines they merely shrug it off by saying that the brothers and sisters have a 'good understanding'. Remember that such a 'good understanding' is simply a prejudiced illusion because if one of the daughters-in-law or sons-in-law has to make a spiteful gripe about something, the family will be split into two hostile factions. Now the same two brothers who were like soul mates before can't even stand the sight of each other now. They will then pointlessly pay hundreds of thousands of Rupees towards legal costs and to other official institutions. How much of their wealth is liberally spent like flowing water in a futile exercise. During the course of their legal battles, occasionally, their assets are frozen and the court places a seal over their factory or shop. Now both families will fall victim to a multitude of personal and family problems. So the Muslim father should amenably encourage his father and brothers to allocate a fixed share to each shareholder. The same should apply to

the house as well. Such a stance will avoid a host of potentially disastrous difficulties.

6. Every Muslim father should study "Islâm Aur Tarbiyat-e-Awlâd" (Islâm and the upbringing of children) by Doctor Habîbullâh Mukhtâr and Tariqae-Wasiyyat by the Ustâds of Madrasah Baitul-'Ilm.

7. If one of your married sons or daughters has already predeceased you, if you feel it appropriate, after consulting your local Muftî, bequeath in favour of your widowed daughter-in-law and grandchildren an amount that your son or daughter would have received from your estate if you had predeceased them. However, this bequest should form a third or less than a third of your net estate. The advantage of this bequest is that just as your sons and daughters will inherit from your estate after your death so would your deceased son's or daughter's children benefit from your estate as beneficiaries to an amount that their father's or mother's siblings inherited from your estate. If you don't make such a bequest they will not inherit anything at all (as grandchildren do not inherit in the presence of male children). However, such a bequest in favour of your grandchildren is not obligatory. Taking stock of your personal circumstances, only if you feel it appropriate you may bequeath something to them so that your grandchildren are not completely dispossessed. Inshâ Allâh, this will be a source of reward for you and a means for improving family ties.

The Son in the Family Business

Every Muslim should ensure that his heirs don't get an opportunity to engage in any form of contention either in his old age or after his death. To this end, each person, depending on his individual needs, should consult proficient

Muftîs and religious-minded experienced people in an attempt to sort out their financial affairs. All his dealings should be clear-cut and well-defined so that there is no problem either in his old age or after his death. One of the things that require clarification at the very outset is the Shar'î perspective on keeping the son or sons within the family business.

Numerous such incidents are handled by the Dârul Iftâ where the father either due to his negligence or due to his failure to keep a written record or perhaps due to his failure to consult proficient 'Ulamâ in his affairs, his family is faced with endless domestic problems after his death. It even leads to a dreadful severance of close family ties. Blood brothers are turned into malicious adversaries.

Allâh ﷻ forbid, for a few paltry coins of this transient world, blood brothers and sisters are transformed into mortal enemies with all ties of family relationship drastically severed. With the purpose of avoiding such a disconcerting situation, we hereunder cite a few techniques, the application of which will, Inshâ Allâh, protect the family from malicious dispute in the future:

1. The moment you include your eldest son in the family business, fix a monthly salary for him right at the very beginning. As the business grows and his responsibilities increase, you may increase his wages accordingly, obviously subject to your financial wherewithal. Bear in mind that the salary should at least see to his basic needs whilst allowing him to set aside something as his pocket money in addition to something he can save up for a rainy day.

2. Another approach to this is that you make him a partner in the business. Determine a fixed and reasonable percentage of the business which will gratify him and which will reward him for his

unflagging efforts whilst allowing him to build up a reasonable capital over the years. In the same manner, as the other sons grow up and join the business, fix a reasonable share of the business for them as well. Inshâ Allâh, application of these two procedures will ensure that upon the death of the father there is no cause for dissent leading up to family problems and fallouts.

Bear in mind that if one of the aforementioned options are not exercised or one negligently ignores it on the grounds that his sons are very close and they won't be faced with any problems or the shop is still small with a very limited capital and there is presently nothing to be alarmed about, the outcome of such nonchalance may be appallingly serious.

At the death of the father, sometimes the eldest son appropriates the entire business with all its assets. He may just offer a paltry sum to his other siblings after years of squabbling and litigation. His younger siblings are reduced to begging for their rightful shares and even if the court passes judgement in their favour, the elder brother indifferently drags his feet in paying them on the pretext that he doesn't have that amount of cash available. He offers to pay them out in paltry monthly instalments. Over the years the monthly instalments are further eroded in value with the ravages of inflation to such an extent that they can't even purchase decent assets or accumulate a reasonable capital for a business venture. They will then grieve over their late father who surrendered his entire estate to such a pitiless son. Some brothers claim that their elder brother is a man of exceptionally noble character but his wife and her family have swindled him outright.

In short, all these problems may crop up simply because of his (the father's) indifference or his negligence or due to him

being unprepared for death or perhaps due to him constantly postponing such an important issue.

At times, upon the distribution of the late father's estate, when the elder brothers receive the same share of the estate as the rest of their younger brothers, they are disposed to protest against the 'unfair' dissolution of the estate. They may object that their father unfairly exploited them. They will say that they joined the family business from a very early age. They were influential in building it into a flourishing business as it is today. They abandoned their studies for this business. They got their sisters married off and even purchased plots for them from the same business. Now when father dies, this younger brother inherits the same as what we inherit! This youngster completed his educational career and all his life he just parked himself off eating out of this business. He doesn't even have any expenditure and overheads to meet. In fact our own sons have come of age. We should, after all, get some positive return on our years of laborious employment in the business."

To avoid such a scenario, the father at the very outset should structure his financial affairs in such a manner that after his death his elder sons don't have any reason to grumble that they were short-changed by the father or they were deprived of their rightful due. At the same time the younger sons will not grouse about the fact that it was no fault of theirs if they came later on into this world. The younger brothers should not be left in a position to whinge that their father left the entire business enterprise solely in the hands of the elder brothers whilst they, the younger siblings, were defrauded of their lawful shares simply because father failed to put pen to paper and record each heir's legitimate share.

So we appeal to each and every father to lay out his state of affairs before the competent 'Ulamâ and Muftîs seeking their

absolute guidance on these affairs. May Allâh ﷻ develop the affairs of our lives and the affairs relating to our death in conformity to His Dîn. Âmîn.

The Working-Class Father

To our working-class brothers working locally or abroad, we appeal to them that since whatever they earn belongs to them, when handing over their salaries to others, they should clearly specify whether it is handed over as a trust or as a gift or as a contribution towards a business partnership etc.

Failure to clarify the nature of the contributions may lead to unremitting problems in the future. The nature of letters received by the Dârul Iftâ upon the death of the father and the subsequent wrangling that goes on amongst the family members aside from the tarnishing of the family name is not even imagined when making such contributions.

In every single aspect of our dealings, Sharî'ah teaches us transparency, avoidance of prevarication and the fulfilment of all rights in a manner that would not lead to future problems or family disputes. So every Muslim is required to muster some courage and instead of thinking what the family, parents and relatives *will think* of him, he should rather ponder over what Allâh ﷻ and His Rasûl ﷺ requires of him. *What is the Shar'î obligation in this instance?* Perhaps disclosing the nature of the contribution would offend the family members *for a few days but Allâh ﷻ will in due course satisfy them. They will eventually notice the advantages of this transparency and the benefits governing these Shar'î* decrees.

Therefore, whatever part of your pay packet you hand over to your parents for their personal use, present it as a gift to them without any anticipating its return to you. Don't even gloat about it in front of your younger siblings. Treat them

well solely and only for the ultimate pleasure of Allâh ﷻ. Try to conceal whatever you present to them in such a manner that not even the wife, children and siblings are aware of what you give them.

Another aspect to this is that whatever you give to your parents for getting your sister married for instance, give it to them as a gift. However, give them only an amount that is sufficient to get her married with simplicity according to the Sunnah. Instead of surrendering to the demands of the family women in such matters, rather bear in mind your own circumstances and marry her off with simplicity.

The aforementioned two suggestions would only apply to a destitute home or when the entire income is spent in basic necessities.

The third aspect to this is that your father has a little corner store and whatever you send to him is ploughed into his shop, in this case you should clearly specify whether your contribution is a gift or a loan or you are purchasing a share of the business etc.

Sometimes, one of the brothers works abroad either in a foreign country or in another city and after he makes himself financially independent he remits a monthly sum of money to his father. This sum enables the family business to flourish. Now when the father departs from this world, the heirs refuse to assign a share of the business to him or even if they do concede to giving him something they would offer him a measly share of the business notwithstanding the fact that the rest of them acquired their own businesses, flats and professions out of the same family business. They took full advantage of the business by milking it to the limit and yet now they want their full share of the inheritance as well.

These brothers enriched themselves with the family business, they became financially independent due to their elder brother's monthly contributions and now the same

brother who laboured for years in a foreign country whilst remitting his total earnings over the years doesn't even end up with a share that is sufficient for him to purchase a decent home or set up an average business. So make sure you specify whether your contribution is a gift, a trust or a loan. This clarity will enable your wife and children to solicit their rightful share of the loan or trust if you have to predecease your father. Alternatively, if your father predeceases you, you will be able to claim the repayment of the loan or the return of the trust. If your hard-earned money is being used to fund lavish wedding ceremonies, useless functions, extravagant dwellings and other sinful activities, do not send any money to the family otherwise you will also be part and parcel of this sin.

Nonetheless, if you are sending money to them, make sure you keep aside part of your salary. If you lose your job or you are unable to earn for some reason or the other like old age etc., at least you will have something to fall back onto without having to stretch your hand before others. Similarly, during the course of your employment, set aside a bit of money for your wife and children either in the form of cash or fixed property. At least this will ensure that, after your death, they are not a nuisance to your brothers, in-laws and other family members.

A fourth angle to this discussion is that both father and son are employed. *The father purchases a plot of land* but he lacks the resources to develop the land. *One of the sons, who is employed abroad, remits a monthly sum* to build a house etc. *Now, he should make sure he draws up* a written agreement *endorsed by all interested parties* to the effect that *his monthly contribution be treated as a loan* and upon the death of father, *this son will inherit his share* of the land and the house etc. *built on the land will belong* to him (the son) *in proportion to his share of the contributions.* One of the advantages of this is that once the estate is wound up, all the heirs will be pleased with their respective

shares. At that point in time, if you are financially able, you may even give the house over to your siblings as a gift. Another advantage to this is that the younger brothers, either due to the sinister instigations of Shaytân through their wives or due to the ominous instigation of others, won't be able to cast you out of your lawful share. The younger siblings won't argue that they helped father in building the house whilst the elder brother was busy revelling in his delightful life abroad. He may have remitted hundreds of thousands for the erection of the house but we also laboured with the sweat of our brow in its erection. So why don't we boot him out.

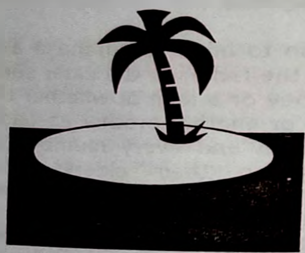
An Important Request

Whenever you plan to build or purchase a house, business etc - whether it is the father or the elder son or whether it is your personal money or a loan or whether the brother living locally contributes or another brother abroad chips in – in all these instances each and every member of the family is obliged to enlighten their elders about the Shar`î requirement in regards to such fixed property. They should draw up a document attested by two senior family members declaring the nature of the property. Who the property belongs to? Which of the brothers are co-partners? Who are the co-owners with the father? Are the daughters, who were provided with gold jewellery and other gifts at their weddings, excluded from any share of this house? Now how many co-partners remain? The son who built his own home with his own money as well as with the money provided by father also be a shareholder to this house? Are any of the uncles or other family members also shareholders of this property? Etc. etc. Details should be recorded and a Muftî consulted for further counsel.

Every Muslim should ensure that he does not wrongfully deprive his siblings and parents out of his love for his wife and children. Also his love for his parents and siblings

should not make him deprive his wife and children of their legitimate share. Each and every one should be given their respective due.

May Allâh ﷻ bring about sincere love between brothers and sisters. May He safeguard their hearts from jealousy and malice right up to their deaths. May He protect them from all causes of hostilities and disputes. Âmîn.



The Ideal Father at a Glance

1. Consider your children a divine bounty of Allâh ﷻ. Rejoice at their birth. Congratulate one another and passionately welcome this boon by expressing your sincere gratitude unto Allâh ﷻ. He has awarded you this golden opportunity to rear a Muslim servant and an ideal prospect for your successor in the Dîn as well as the *dunyâ*. You have become a means to expand the Muslim population by adding on another Dâ'î and servant of Dîn.

2. If you are not bestowed with any children, make Du'â for pious children as the chosen Rasûl of Allâh ﷻ, Hadrat Zakariyyâ ﷺ made Du'â:

رَبِّ هَبْ لِيْ مِن لَّدُنْكَ ذُرِّيَّةً طَيِّبَةً إِنَّكَ سَمِيعُ الدُّعَاءِ

"O my Lord! Bestow upon me, from Your side, well-disposed children. Verily, You are most-attentive to all Du'âs." *[Sûrah Âl-Imrân]*

3. Don't ever fall into gloom at the birth of a child. Either due to financial constraints or health reasons or due whatever reason it may be, at all costs refrain from fretting over the birth of the child. Don't regard the child as an intolerable burden unto you and avoid condemning the child.

4. After the birth of the child, bathe him and clean him up. Thereafter call out the Azân in the right ear and Iqâmah in the left ear. There is great wisdom in conveying the name of Allâh ﷻ and His Rasûl ﷺ into the ears of the child the moment he is born. 'Allâmah Ibnul Qayyim writes in his book Tuhfatul-Wadûd: "In other words, the first words to reach the child's ears should be regarding the greatness of Allâh ﷻ. The *Shahâdah* (testimony of Islâm) which every Muslim pronounces upon entering the fold of Islâm is conveyed to the child the moment he opens his

eyes in this world just as the Kalimah of Tauhid is conveyed to a person about to breathe his last. Another advantage of calling out the Azân and Iqâmah is that Shaytân who is lurking about to adversely afflict the child takes flight the moment he hears the Azân. So instead of transmitting the call of Shaytân to the child first, he is, before anything else, invited to Islâm and the worship of Allâh ﷻ."

5. After the Azân and Iqâmah, if possible, get a pious person to chew a date or something sweet and place it onto the child's palate and request his Du'â in favour of the child.

6. Select a good name for the child. You may select the name of a Nabî, Sahâbî or Sahâbiyyah or you may even select a name of Allâh ﷻ with the prefix 'Abd, like 'Abdullâh, 'Abdur-Rahmân etc.

7. If, out of ignorance, you selected an unfavourable name, change it to a suitable name.

8. Perform 'Aqîqah on the seventh day. Slaughter two goats (or sheep) for a boy and one goat (or sheep) for a girl. Two goats are not obligatory for a boy. Even one goat would suffice. Also shave his head and distribute its equivalent of gold or silver in charity.

9. On the seventh day, circumcise the male child. However, if this is not possible by the seventh day, get it done at least before he is seven years old. *Khatnah* (circumcision) is an Islâmic characteristic.

10. When the child starts talking, teach him the words of "Lâ ilâha Illallâh" first.

11. Encourage the mother (your wife) to breastfeed the child as well. This is a right of the child over the mother.

Breastfeeding is one of the favours the Holy Qur'ân reminds the children about, thereby emphasising the importance of showing kindness to the mother. The child naturally develops more love for the mother who breastfeeds him. Such children are generally more obedient and the mothers also have fewer complains about such children. Coupled with this, it is also the mother's responsibility that with every drop of milk, she imparts the lesson of Tauhid, the love of Rasûlullâh ﷺ, the devotion to Dîn to the child and also that she endeavours to instil this love in his heart and soul. Do not lighten your burdens and relegate your responsibility onto the mother's shoulders but fulfil this pleasant religious obligation yourself and you will be blessed with spiritual tranquillity and joy. As far as possible, stay away from *Tawizes* (amulets etc.) for the children. Instead of utilising *Tawîzes* for them, teach them the Du'âs for various occasions. Recite verses of the Holy Qur'ân and blow on them yourself. Also inculcate in them the habit of reciting the *Manzil* and memorising the verses contained therein.

12. Refrain from intimidating the child. The anxiety he suffers in these developing years will affect his mind and soul for the rest of his lifetime. Generally, such children are not primed to accomplish any feat of merit. Also, don't force the child to do anything when he his hungry.

13. Be particularly cautious about scolding, admonishing and rebuking the child for every trivial matter. Instead of showing disgust towards their deficiencies, with wisdom and enthusiasm, endeavour to rear them with love and affection. Nonetheless, your conduct with them should portray that you will not tolerate anything contrary to the Sharî'ah.

14. Always treat your children with love, affection and warmth. As far as possible, attend to their needs and kindle their spirit of obedience. Avoid questioning the child

about Why? When? and Who? Avoid questions like: "Why did you do this? Don't you have any shame? When would you learn? I don't know what to do with you!" Instead of admonishing the child in this manner, employ a positive stance. Rub your hand over his head and very affectionately explain that this is not what should be done. Etc. etc.

15. Show love and affection to the younger children. Rub your hands affectionately over their heads. Take them into your lap and love them. Your conduct with them should be one of cheerfulness and joviality. Don't act like a stern and cruel ruler with them. Conducting yourself in this stern manner will fail to encourage any loving spirit in the hearts of the children for their parents. Also, the children will fail to develop any form of self-confidence and the harsh behaviour of their parents has an adverse effect on the natural nurturing of the child.

16. Expend all your energies in providing your children with decent education and wholesome upbringing. In pursuit of this objective, don't be the least hesitant. This is your religious obligation, a great favour unto your children and a great act of goodwill unto yourself as well.

17. When the child reaches the age of seven, teach him about the performance of Salâh. Instruct him to observe this act of 'Ibâdat. Make the girls perform the Salâh with their mother and take the boys with you to the Musjid and try to develop the enthusiasm for the performance of Salâh. When they turn ten and they show any shortcoming in discharging this obligation, punish them appropriately. Let your actions and statements point out to them that you would not tolerate any form of carelessness in the discharge of this duty.

18. When they turn ten, separate their beds and make each one of them sleep on separate beds.

19. Always keep the children clean and tidy. Be very particular about their hygiene, bathing and cleanliness. Ensure that their clothes are clean and *pâk* (pure). However, abstain from excessive grooming and vanity. Keep the girls clothing simple as well. Don't ruin the morals of the children by making them wear flamboyant and gaudy clothing.

20. Avoid mentioning their faults in front of others. Be very cautious about putting the child to shame. At all costs, refrain from bruising his ego. Similarly, when one of them errs, don't scold all of them. Advise the offender separately or take appropriate action against him alone.

21. In front of the children, don't reveal your despair over their failure to rectify themselves. In fact, to boost their spirits, praise them wholeheartedly even over trivial achievements. Always try to encourage them and raise their spirit of self-confidence.

22. Relate to them the stories of the Ambiyâ ﷺ. Explain how they invited the non-Muslims to Islâm and what role their character played in attracting the infidels to Islâm. Also narrate to them gallant incidents from the lives of the Sahâbah ؓ and other pious people. Regard such narration as crucial for their morals and for the development of their affiliation towards Dîn. In spite of your thousand and one other chores, take out a bit of time for this as well. May Allâh ﷻ assist you and all the other Muslim parents. Âmîn.

23. Periodically, make the children distribute alms, food etc. to the poor with their own hands. This would promote a spirit of sympathy and generosity towards the poor. Now and again, allow them to distribute food, (sweets etc.) to their other siblings as well, as this would engender a sense of recognising the rights of others and create a spirit of impartiality amongst them.

24. Do not comply with the child's every whim and fancy. With tact and wisdom, try to dissuade the child from this habit. Employ a bit of harshness now and again. Don't turn them into obstinate and adamant children by showering them with misplaced love.

25. Avoid speaking in harsh tones. Avoid yelling and shrieking and advise the children to speak in a moderate and gentle tone as well. Also stress upon them to avoid shouting and yelling at one another.

26. Develop amongst them the habit of doing everything by themselves. They should avoid depending on the servants for every little thing.

27. If there is a squabble amongst children, don't be prejudiced by unfairly siding with your child. Remember, just as you cherish certain feelings for your own child, other parents also cherish the same feelings in favour of their children. Also, don't take heed to the complaints of the wife about your nephews and neighbours children etc.

28. Always be impartial to all your children. Be very cautious and refrain from showing favouritism at all costs. If you have a greater inclination to one of your children you are excused but as far as your conduct, behaviour and dealings are concerned, you should be impartial and fair to each one of them.

29. Always be an excellent example to your children. You are unto your children a perpetual and silent teacher who is always studied and scrutinised by the children. Even in jest, do not speak lies before your children.

30. Be cheerful on the birth of a daughter just as you are cheerful on the birth of a son. Girls or boys, both are blessings of Allâh ﷻ. Allâh ﷻ alone knows which is best for you; a boy or a girl.

31. Bring up your daughters with heartfelt joy, devout happiness, and a sense of religious spirit. In compensation of this, cherish the hope of Jannah from Allâh ﷻ.

32. Do not regard the female child as inferior to the male and do not give him preference over her. Expose the same love for both of them and conduct yourself impartially with both of them.

33. With enthusiasm and care, ensure that you give the girls their fixed share of a. deceased's estate. Also, be specific in your will about depriving the daughters of their share of the inheritance. Make sure you study books on this subject like 'Tarîqa-e-Wasiyyat 'and 'Ahkâm-e-Mayyit'.

34. The ideal father is he who instils the honour and esteem of his wife (their mother) into the hearts of her children.

35. Similarly, the ideal father is he who refrains from arguing and quarrelling with his wife in front of the children. In spite of the most detestable behaviour of his wife, he exercises tolerance in front of them. Later on, when he is alone with her, he explains the proper situation to her and that he didn't say anything at that time because of the children. Similarly, the ideal father is he who refrains from giving the wife and children any sad news the moment he comes home. He does not pounce on them with a volley of questions nor does he criticise them on any of their shortcomings the moment he seps foot into the house. Instead, he greets them with Salâm, has a drink of water and then says what has to be said.

36. The ideal father is he who tries to maintain between two children an appropriate gap that allows the first one to complete breastfeeding and become a bit self-sufficient and also it affords the mother to overcome her weakness she suffered due to childbirth and breastfeeding. This gives her

the opportunity to lighten her shoulders from the turmoil of a very young child. Now when she has no other valid Shar'î excuse, she prepares herself for the next child so that each one of them can be brought up correctly and each one is awarded individual attention. This gap also offers her the opportunity to offer each child her individual attention and also it also allows her to recuperate after the weakness of childbirth, breastfeeding etc. Furthermore, this gap ensures that the milk she is presently feeding is not adversely affected by another pregnancy. Therefore, it is recommended that the couple employ temporary measures of birth control and maintain a reasonable gap between their children. In fact, in view of the health of the mother or the child or on grounds of compelling reasons, after consulting with the Muftîs, she may even maintain a longer gap provided her intentions are not warped.

37. The ideal father is he who honours his wife's mother as well as his own mother in a manner pleasing unto Allâh ﷻ and this in turn engenders the same graciousness, Dînî spirit and honour amongst his children as well. He who happens to be 'a coolness unto the eyes' of his mother and the wife's mother, his children will also be a 'coolness unto his eyes'.

38. The ideal father is he who practises upon the advices proffered in this book and endeavours to instil these attributes into his Muslim brothers as well. He also encourages his Muslim brothers to read this book and books like Tohfa-e-Dulhâ, Fadâil Â'mâl, Fadâil Sadaqât. He also makes Du'â for the compiler of this book and the people who have assisted in its publication and also for those men and women engaged in the effort of Dîn.

39. Do not keep two daughters-in-law of conflicting temperament together. Ensure that you don't get two of your sons married at the same time. If you have to do this, ensure that they stay separately. This arrangement

encompasses a number of benefits and advantages to all parties concerned. For further information on this topic, read the book Tohfa-e-Dulhâ under the chapter "advices to the parents of the groom".

40. When your daughter reaches the age of seven, bring her up in such a manner that she avoids shaking hands with men and she covers all her hair when she steps out of the home. Also, from an early age, develop the habit of making her wear long dresses and *izâr* (cotton pants) so that her legs remain covered at all times.

41. Together with the aforementioned strategies, make Du'â for your children with ardent zeal and enthusiasm. Also abstain from the disobedience of Allâh ﷻ and restrain others from the same. It is hoped that Allâh ﷻ would not thrust aside the sincere Du'âs emanating from the depths of the parent's hearts.

Test Yourself

Respected Father!

Read the following questions thoroughly at least thrice. With an open heart and mind, ponder over the questions and answer them as accurately as possible. If you answer in the affirmative, give yourself ten marks in the space provided. If the answer is partially yes and partially no, give yourself five marks. If, Allāh ﷻ forbid, you answer no to any of the questions, give yourself a zero in the space provided.

If you score total marks, express your boundless *Shukr* (gratitude) unto Allāh ﷻ, the Most High for making you an ideal father. However, if you score anything less, strive to overcome all your deficiencies and together with Du'âs, endeavour to make yourself an ideal father.

Question One

When you decided to marry, did you search for a pious and faithful wife and an ideal mother for your children? If you were oblivious to this at that time, are you now concerned about making her a pious, religious and ideal woman?

Answer: .... Marks:...........

Question Two

Do you make Du'â for pious children? After the birth of your children, did you express your gratitude unto Allāh ﷻ by appreciating them? In fulfilment of this gratitude, are you really concerned about their religious upbringing with love and affection? Do you always attempt to ensure that they are not deprived of their mother's milk?

Answer: .... Marks:...........

Question Three

Do you get up for Fajr Salâh and after performing Wudū etc. do you get your wife and elder sons up with love and affection for Salâh? Do you take them with you to the Musjid

for the Fajr Salâh and do you attempt to obtain the Takbîr-e-Ûlâ? Do you encourage your wife and daughters to perform their Salâh at home? Do you make Du'â for your wife and children in earnest?

Answer: .... Marks:...........

Question Four

Are you impartial with all your children especially between the boys and girls? On the birth of a girl, are you as overjoyed as when you are on the birth of a son? In order to bolster their confidence, do you frequently congratulate your children on their outstanding achievements? Do you behold an intelligent child and a stupid child with the same eye? Are you unbiased whenever you attempt to bolster their spirits?

Answer: .... Marks:...........

Question Five

When the child is guilty of some misdemeanour, bearing in mind his temperamental nature, after you very tenderly explain and advise him, do you admonish him with love and affection as well? Do you employ a positive approach that ensures he refrains from such a misdemeanour in the future? In the case where you had threatened to punish him over any offence, in order to retain the awe in his heart, did you punish him after he had committed that offence? Similarly, in order to lodge the esteem and awe of their mother within their hearts, do you ever praise her in front of them?

Answer: .... Marks:.............

Question Six

Do you maintain strict supervision over your children? Are you fastidious about their cleanliness, neatness, food, clothing etc.? Do you make them have breakfast in front of you? Do you assist their mother in preparation for school, Madrasah etc.? Do you strive to acquaint them with the

Islamic etiquettes and Du'âs? Do you attempt to develop within them the spirit to become 'Ulamâ?

Answer: .... Marks: ....

Question Seven

Upon receiving a complaint of your child, do you refrain from insulting or humiliating him in front of everyone else? Allâh ﷻ forbid, do you thrash him even before you thoroughly investigate the complaint? If he is really at fault, do you advise him with all your love and affection in privacy so as not to wound his self-esteem?

Similarly, if you receive a complaint from your wife and children, do you thoroughly investigate the charge with an open mind so that you are not left to regret your decision later on?

Answer: .... Marks:................

Question Eight

In view of the unremitting hostilities between sisters-in-law and between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law nowadays which leads to a host of domestic problems, do you, as far as possible, try to provide separate accommodation for everyone concerned? Do you at least try to provide a separate kitchen for each daughter-in-law? Do you conduct yourself with your parents in the same manner as you would like your children to treat you? Do you ever give your parents any reason to grumble about your behaviour with them?

Answer: .... Marks:................

Question Nine

"O you who believe! Save yourselves and your families from (the) fire." *[Sûrah Tahrîm]*

In the context of this Qur'ânic injunction you are charged with a number of responsibilities. For instance, the spiritual nurturing of your wife and children, striving to mould them within a cast of piety and religiousness etc. Do you

endeavour to fulfil these responsibilities in a positive manner with the determination and perseverance of a Dâ'î?

Answer: .... Marks:.................

Question Ten

Have you drawn up your will? Have you encouraged your wife and grown-up children to draw up their will as well? Have you studied books on this subject like Tarîqah-e-Wasiyyat published by Baitul-'Ilm, Ahkâme-Mayyit by Doctor 'Abdul-Hayy *rahmatullâhi 'alaih* , Akâbir Ke Wasâyâ by Muftî Sabbâr Dânish and Kitâb-e-Wasâyâ by Khâjah Âfarîdî?

Answer: .... Marks:..............

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